



Window on Jordan

By Star Staff Writer

THIS HAS been an exceptional week for Jordanians; one of many to come. The weekly tabloids—their front pages smudged with ink, and screaming headlines, poignant cartoons and half-naked Italian models parading on the back pages—have been forced to shut down.

No more tabloids, and no more hints and insinuations of the abnormal and unusual in our society. The quasi-journalistic products, processed and

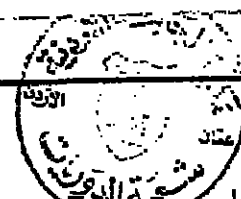
manufactured to sensationalize and tantalize, have been banned by official decree. Jordanians are still debating whether to celebrate or denounce the edict.

For years the tabloids have been praised and cursed, loved and hated, sought and exorcised. The paradoxical relationship that Jordanians had with what many called "yellow journalism" was indeed unique. Or else how did many of these publications last for so long? This is a question that serious jour-

nalists and their worried publishers asked themselves every day.

To be fair and objective, which is something that many of the sensational papers were not, the weeklies added flavor and tang to a press that was, until their debut, accused of being dull, benign and bland. They crossed all sorts of red lines and bravely took their readers to where no Jordanian

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I read my tabloid on the Internet anyways!!



The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Du matin au soir,
il chante Dieu aux hommes...

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AMMAN, 2-8 OCTOBER 1997, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 19, 350 fils

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

A week of intense drama ends with Yassin's release

King's intervention defuses explosive situation after attempt on Mashal's life

By Raed Al Abed

THE SERIES of dramatic and potentially explosive events of the past week have culminated with even more drama and lesser tension. They started with the attempt, it now appears by Israeli Mossad agents, on the life of Hamas politburo chief in Amman, Khaled Mashal, on Thursday and climaxed with the sudden release by Israel of the organization's spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin at dawn on Wednesday. In between the two major events, secret deals and contacts had taken place, most of which were carried out at the highest levels.

The intervention by His Majesty King Hussein through intensive diplomatic efforts succeeded in defusing a crisis which could have led to violence and confrontation. Most dangerous, the King's successfully managed to prevent that confrontation from spilling into Jordan and the region in general.

Israel's surprise release of Sheikh Yassin was officially based on his deteriorating health. He was flown in by a Jordanian helicopter from Israel to the King Hussein Medical City where he was personally received by the King. Israel said it released Sheikh Yassin in response to an appeal by King Hussein. Israel also released another Palestinian prisoner who also arrived in Jordan.

The King on Tuesday had called on Israel to free Sheikh Yassin and other Palestinian prisoners as a step towards moving forward the flailing Israel-Palestinian peace talk. The King's call for the Yassin's release came during a speech in Zarqa.

Sheikh Yassin, who is in his early 60s, was arrested in 1989 for allegedly encouraging his



Sheikh Yassin

followers to kill Palestinians who cooperated with the Israeli occupation.

The Sheikh is paralyzed in all four limbs, confined to his wheelchair and needs help in all daily activities. He suffers from muscular deterioration, chronic breathing problems, many internal infections, a hearing loss and needs constant medical care.

Political analysts said the release of Sheikh Yassin could not be separated from events that followed the assassination attempt on Mashal in Amman less than a week before.

The attack on Mashal, who is considered the main political leader of Hamas, was committed by two foreigners holding Canadian passports. One of the men apparently hit him on the head and injected him with an unknown chemical substance that later disabled the breathing control center in his brain.

The mysterious "weapon" was not found, but the two men were arrested after Mashal's driver pursued them in his car and later clashed with them as they were attempting to flee.

Mashal, who is a Jordanian citizen, was elected to the political politburo of Hamas

last year to replace Musa Abu Marzook, who was in detention in the United States at the time. Abu Marzook was deported to Jordan earlier this year.

The Canadian embassy in Amman refused to comment on the incident, and referred The Star to the Foreign Ministry in Canada. In a telephone call to Ottawa, Canada, the spokesman of the Foreign Ministry in Ottawa, Rodney Moore, could only confirm to The Star that "the two men are carrying Canadian passports." He added that they had refused the assistance of the Canadian Consular in Jordan.

"They refused our offers to provide them with a lawyer, a doctor, and they even refused an offer to inform their families in Canada," Mr. Moore said.

Mashal's condition has been described by his doctors as stable and he is expected to leave the King Hussein Medical City in the coming two days. Doctors were unable to diagnose or treat his condition in the first 48 hours and news about a secret deal under which Israel was forced to hand in an antidote to the poisonous chemical agent could not be confirmed.

But for Jordan, the attack on Mashal was a serious and an unexpected incident. The attempt on his life came one week after two Israeli embassy guards were shot at by unknown assailants. While Hamas denied any connection to the attack, Israel, on the other hand, accused the Islamic resistance movement of being behind the attack. It is not clear if the attempt on Mashal's life was an Israeli response to the embassy incident.

But Jordanian officials expressed their fear that the conflict between Hamas, which has been waging a bloody war against occupation, and Israel

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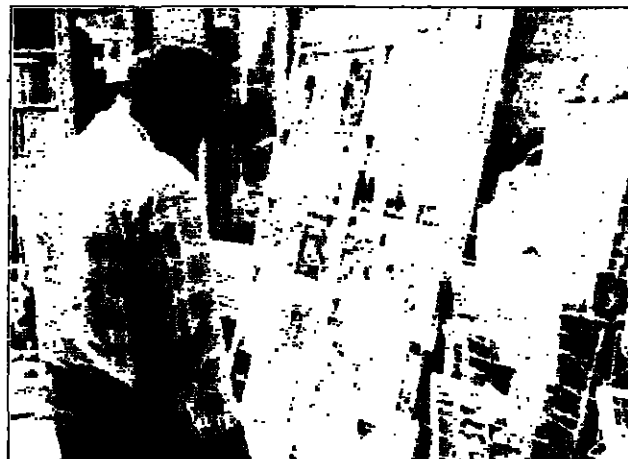
ARABIAN PUREBREDS—Iraqi painter Ali Al Mi'mar poses next a painting of Arabian horses, one of many he is exhibiting currently in Amman (see story on page 3). The exhibition coincides with the opening of the 8th Arabian Horse Festival, which is organized by the Royal Jordanian Equestrian Federation and the Royal Jordanian Society for Arabian Horses, under the patronage of HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein. The festival, which ends on Friday, kicked off on Tuesday at the Royal Racing Club with six races for Arabian horses from Jordan, Qatar and Syria competing for prizes worth \$28,000 sponsored by the president of the United Arab Emirates and the UAE's Equestrian Federation. The remaining events, which will take place at the Royal Stables in Al Hummar include a dressage event, horse-jumping and beauty competition in which 220 horses from Jordan, Syria, UAE, Palestine, Qatar and the US will be judged by international experts. (Photo Fuad Jbour)

Weekly newspapers take their case to court, political parties lash at suspension decision

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer
THE FAMOUS Abu Ali news kiosk in downtown Amman misses the crowds. Because of the forced suspension of the publication of 13 weekly newspapers loyal readers have stopped coming. However, the kiosk continues to service readers from other Arab nationalities, particularly Egyptians, who flock in to buy their favorite Egyptian tabloids and other papers coming from home. At a bookshop few hundred meters on the opposite side of Abu Ali's kiosk, visitors and tourists have access to all sorts of European tabloids and other newspapers and magazines.

In fact many Arab and foreign newspapers are available in different bookshops in the country. But the Jordanian tabloids are not there anymore. They are busy fighting for their survival in the courts.



The suspension of the 13 weekly papers, for failing to meet the capital requirements of the new press law, will render no less than 200 editors, reporters, photographers and designers jobless.

The weeklies say they have

adjusted their capital registration under the law. But the Press and Publication Dept. disagrees and says the JD 300,000 working capital must be paid in full.

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Israeli, Palestinian leaders agree to resume peace talks

By Norman Kempster

UNITED NATIONS—Israeli and Palestinian leaders revived their stalled peace process Monday, agreeing to resume direct talks on implementing existing accords and to start new bargaining to clear the way for negotiations over the final status of the land that both claim as their ancestral home.

US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who mediated the agreement between Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Palestinian negotiator Mahmoud Abbas, said it has "arrested the downward spiral" of relations in the Middle East. Albright characterized the agreement as "a medium step" in the diplomatic process and added that she was "more hopeful today than yesterday" over the prospects for Middle East peace.

Observers say that if both sides approach the parallel negotiations with goodwill, they could lead to a complete settlement. But in substance, the steps are little more than an agreement to talk about additional talks. The process remains extremely fragile and could be stalled again by a terrorist bomb or new Israeli settlement activity.

Levy and Abbas specifically agreed to resume talks next week in the Middle East over implementation of the peace agreement signed on the White House lawn in 1993. Those talks are expected to focus on the creation of an airport and seaport.

In Palestinian-controlled territory and on safe passage for Palestinians across Israel between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Talks are to begin in Washington the week of Oct. 12 that focus on a much broader agenda, including:

■ Continued cooperation against terrorism.

■ Further redeployments of Israeli forces in the West Bank, having the effect of transferring more territory from Israeli to Palestinian control.

■ Defining a "time-out," suggested by Albright, on provocative steps by either side.

■ Acceleration to a mutually agreed target date of talks about the permanent status of the territory captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast War.

On the issue that means the most to Israel, the Palestinian

Authority pledged Monday to expand its cooperation with Israeli police on security and counterterrorism measures. But the agreements were far more vague on matters at the top of the Palestinian wish list.

Although Levy agreed to open talks on Albright's call for a "time-out" on provocative actions, he refused to commit Israel to suspend the expansion of West Bank and Gaza settlements, to stop confiscating land and to stop demolishing Palestinian homes. Reading a statement agreed to by Levy and Abbas, Albright said: "We all recognized that security is a critical foundation for moving the peace process forward. The Israeli and Palestinian sides agreed to enhance their bilateral security cooperation in the fight against terror."

Abbas underlined the Palestinian commitment, telling reporters, "In order to guarantee the success for the endeavor, we must pave the way by stepping up our cooperation ... in the fight against violence and terror." According to Israeli television, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government is especially pleased that the Palestinian Authority finally has started rounding up the "big fish" among the leaders of organizations blamed for suicide bombings this summer in Jerusalem that derailed the peace process.

The report said that the arrests include 15 of the top 38 people whom Israel has wanted detained. When negotiations begin next week on implementing the 1993 accords, Levy and Abbas will serve as co-chairmen of the talks, Albright said. She said that the Israelis and the Palestinians have not yet named their delegations to the negotiations in Washington the following week.

The objective of the Washington talks is to accelerate "final status" negotiations, which the 1993 accords envisioned occurring after a five-year interim period of limited Palestinian self-rule. Final status issues include whether the Palestinians will be allowed to establish an independent state, the borders of such a state, water rights and—perhaps the most emotional of all—the future of Jerusalem.

Albright said that Levy and

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By Richard C. Paddock

KAZBEGI CHECKPOINT. Georgia—Truck driver Taimuraz Taimurazov heats his spaghetti with a blowtorch. His kitchen table is a plank by the side of the road, and he sleeps in his cab in a long line of trucks parked near the Russian border.

For the past five weeks, the trucker has been stuck in this narrow mountain pass with a dispute with his native Russia, but he never lacks for something to drink. He is hauling 30 tons of nearly pure alcohol.

"I've been sitting here for more than a month," said Taimurazov, who has broken open his shipment to help pass the time. "If the alcohol was bad, we'd be dead by now."

To Georgian authorities, Tai-

Russia puts lid on illegal Vodka shipments

mazov and his fellow drivers are law-abiding drivers carrying legitimate cargo. But to Russia, they are smugglers trying to sneak ethyl alcohol across the border

for the manufacture of low-grade, illegal—and sometimes lethal—vodka.

Russian officials say the illegal trade in alcohol is costing the government nearly \$6 million a day in lost tax revenues and contributing to a soaring increase in deaths across the nation from the consumption of poisonous moonshine vodka.

In mid-July, Russia closed its border with Georgia to trucks hauling untaxed and unlicensed alcohol. As a result, hundreds of

Russian and Georgian trucks have been stuck for weeks at a time in a no man's land at the Kazbegi border post, unable to enter Russia and unwilling to head back into Georgia.

"You call this a life?" asked Taimuraz Khutushvili, a Georgian trucker stranded at a checkpoint where he has always been able to cross with shipments of alcohol. "We've been stuck here a month and a half already. We haven't got any patience left. We're like madmen."

Russia's refusal to allow the alcohol into the country—unusual enough in itself—has touched off a heated dispute with Georgia and created a bizarre scene at the Kazbegi border crossing, where truckers camp, drink and slaughter sheep for dinner near the ruins of a 12th century castle.

Georgian officials estimate

that at least 500 trucks—and possibly more than 1,000—have been blocked from entering Russia, depriving the world's most ardent drinkers of 10,000 to 20,000 tons of alcohol.

In a nationwide radio address, Russian President Boris N. Yeltsin defended the decision to keep out the trucks, saying that the production of illicit vodka in Russia is undermining legitimate, taxpaying distilleries and costing the government the equivalent of \$172 million a month in lost tax revenues.

"State control over the alcohol market has virtually been lost," Yeltsin declared. "I demand that order be introduced in the manufacture and sale of alcohol."

In Soviet times, the president said, taxes on alcohol contributed 25 percent of Russia's budget. Today, the amount has fal-

len to just 5 percent. Funds that once supported the government now finance a vast network of bootlegging and other criminal activity, he said.

"The money goes to those who evade taxes for the manufacture or import of alcohol," Yeltsin said. "The money also goes to corrupt staffers of law enforcement, to officials, and a great number of them profit from this business."

Until Russia began its blockade, bootleggers were importing ethyl alcohol from at least 17 countries, including the United States and Canada. Typically, they would dilute the 96 percent pure alcohol with water, bottle it to look like legitimate brands of vodka, ship it to cities around the country and sell it at stores and sidewalk kiosks.

Russian officials say that 70 percent of all vodka sold in the

country is now produced illegally in North Ossetia—a republic in southern

Russia near the Georgian border where most of the stranded trucks were bound.

With so much alcohol being produced without even token state inspections or health regulations, the number of deaths from alcohol poisoning has nearly tripled in the past five years, Yeltsin said.

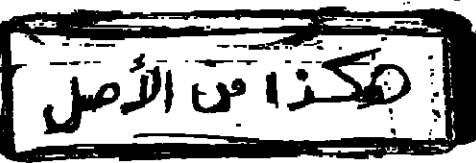
Officially, the government estimates that 35,000 Russians died from alcohol poisoning last year—and some analysts put the number at many thousands more. Episodes of mass poisonings from tainted alcohol have become commonplace. Spot checks of vodka sold from street kiosks have found that up to 50 percent is unfit for consumption, Yeltsin said.

While the Georgian government does not question Russia's right to halt the shipment of alcohol into the country, it is not happy about the way its giant neighbor is carrying out its new policy.

Instead of following the common practice of letting trucks reach the border post, inspecting them and seizing any illicit cargo, Russia has forced the trucks to remain on the Georgian side.

"They should be dealing with the problem on their side of the border, not ours," protested Valery Chikheidze, chief of Georgia's border guards.

The heavily loaded vehicles have taken up residence in the steep Caucasus Mountain gorge along the Terek River, parking in tunnels and on both sides of the roadway. Georgian officials worry that the huge quantity of highly flammable alcohol could result in a disastrous explosion, permanently shutting down the main road that leads to



A week of intense drama ends with Sheikh Yassin's release

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could be moving to Jordanian soil.

While the initial reaction of the official Jordanian spokesman was to deny an assassination attempt, the government later admitted that Mashaal was the target of the attack.

While there is no official confirmation, the finger now points to the Israeli Mossad. Unconfirmed reports say His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan flew to Israel on Sunday to confront Benjamin Netanyahu with "hard evidence" proving that Mossad was responsible. Such an attack is a stark violation of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty.

Meanwhile, Hamas was not waiting for official reports. It accused Israel of attempting to export the conflict to the "outside" by liquidating Hamas leaders in Jordan. The group said Israel would "pay dearly" for Thursday's assassination attempt.

However, extensive efforts by the King and Prince Hassan were paramount in reducing the tension.

Prince Hassan travelled to the United States Tuesday on an unscheduled visit to deliver



Mashaal bed-ridden at King Hussein Medical City

a message from King Hussein to President Clinton. Informed sources said the Prince carried a file to present to the American leadership about the outcome of investigations with Mashaal's attackers, which according to sources implicated the Mossad.

Political analysis in Jordan said Yassin's release may be part of a deal in which the Jordanian government would release the two men accused in the Mashaal attack. On Tuesday,

lawyers said Jordanian prosecutors were treating that case as attempted murder.

Lawyer Hussein Mjall who filed a law suit on behalf of Mashaal excluded that the assailants would be released soon. "It is illegal to release the suspects before ending the investigations," he added that "the investigations are still in progress."

In a statement released by the information office of Hamas the movement said

"Jordan's efforts are highly appreciated." Many of Hamas' political leaders outside Palestine are Jordanian citizens, including Mashaal, Ibrahim Ghosheh, Hamas' spokesman and Mohammad Nazal the representative of Hamas in Amman.

Analysts said Jordanian diplomacy also succeeded in improving relations with the movement whose spokesman, Ibrahim Ghosheh, was released last week after two weeks in custody in Jordan.

However, the Palestinian National Authority criticized the release, calling it an "expulsion," and the Sheikh's son said his father had refused several Israeli offers to release him outside the Palestinian territories.

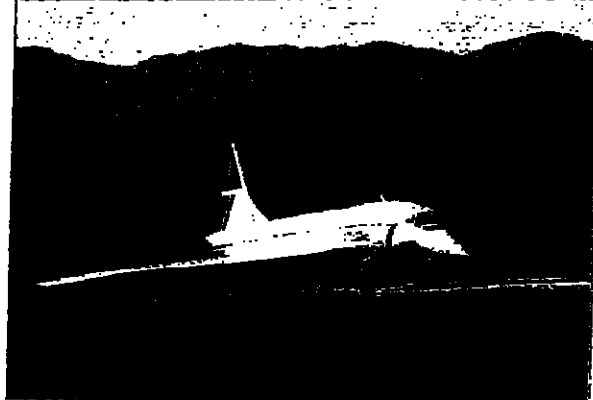
In Amman, Dr Musa Abu Marzuq said that he was assured by King Hussein during a telephone call, Wednesday, that Sheikh Yassin arrived to Jordan for medical treatment and then would return to his homeland whenever he wants, without any objection from any party.

According to Abu Marzuq the King denied that the arrival of Sheikh Yassin to Jordan was actually an expulsion. ■

NMC launches new musical season with piano recital

■ The National Music Conservatory (NMC) Noor Al Hussein Foundation will launch its 1997-98 musical season on Sunday 5 October at the RCC. The event will feature the famous Russian pianist Victor Bunin. Prof. Bunin graduated from the Moscow Conservatory in 1981. He teaches at the Moscow Conservatory Music College. He has given recitals in America, Europe and Asia. In his Amman recital, Bunin will perform pieces by Schumann, Chopin, Debussy and Ravel.

October will witness three more musical activities with concerts by the National Music Conservatory, under the baton of Jordanian conductor Rida Murada, and from Germany, the Hannover Boys Choir, comprised of 70 singers, and the Orchestra of the NMC, under the baton of professor Heinz Hennig.



Concorde arrives in Amman Friday on 10th Anniversary visit

THE BRITISH Airways Concorde Arrives in Amman tomorrow, Friday, for its tenth visit since 1987. The Concorde will be carrying 100 passengers who have been treated to three days of sightseeing since the Concorde landed in Amman on Wednesday. The six-day excursion in Amman and the surrounding areas includes Petra, Taybet Zaman, Wadi Rum, Jerash, and the Dead Sea.

Mr. Jan Knou, Managing Director at Goowood Travel Ltd., the company that organises these "Flights of Fantasy" trips in conjunction with British Airways, commented on the trip's popularity by saying, "The main attraction to Jordan is not only the tourist sight that people the world over have heard about and long to see, but also the fun aspect that few know about, our program for the Concorde passengers is filled with many surprises that many visitors do not anticipate and are not told of before-land." One couple, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Perival, has chosen the Jordan trip to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

The Concorde's thunderous roar can be heard as it approaches Queen Alia's International Airport at 4 pm on Friday afternoon to continue what is sure to be an unforgettable journey for its passengers. ■

JORDANIAN PAPERS

By Marwan Al Asmar

Islamists, were to next?

THE LATEST announcement by Islamic Action Front (IAF) female member, Nawal Al Faouri, not to abide by her party's boycott decision is a further proof that the movement is going through hard times because of its historic and now controversial stand on the elections. It also means that increasing members of both the Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF now believe that the boycott decision is viewed as a strategic mistake that is creating political turmoil among the rank and file.

Al Faouri, a member of the IAF Shura Council, says plainly that the decision was not carefully studied, came at a late stage and was therefore short-sighted. Like a number of other members, the first woman in the council points out that she is actively considering running for the elections.

This may be the most serious criticism yet and could point out to an open rift within the movement. Bassam Al Umoush and Abdallah Al Akeleh, traditionally the most pragmatic in the movement, are today joined by such people like IAF General Secretary Ishaq Al Furhan and Hamza Mansour in openly criticizing the boycott decision. Although they are willing to abide by what the majority has decided, they are expressing doubts about the wisdom of such a decision.

These names also clearly suggest that the rift, which could gain further momentum as we go into the elections campaign, may have its basis in the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood, the religious reference for the mainstream Islamic movement in Jordan, and the IAF, its political arm.

Over the past couple of years the Muslim Brotherhood has been acting from the background, taking a back seat and allowing IAF deputies to shine under the limelight. The Brotherhood came to be regarded as an organization involved in spiritual and charitable work only. But their decision back in July proved otherwise, that they could stretch their muscles if they want as they are the real power brokers behind the scenes. In this since too, they are not only the final arbiters, but also the decision-makers, and can even over-ride the recommendations of the Islamic Action Front.

But this is all very well in theory. The Muslim Brotherhood's position as a reference point for the IAF is already taking its toll on the Islamists politicians who now see things differently from their spiritual leaders. The internal rift inside the Islamist movement has given the government more room for maneuver in the latest crisis. As it appears the Islamists have won nothing from their latest showdown with the government.

The government is now eyeing with interest the result of this latest crisis inside the Islamists ranks, adopting the usual wait and see policy.

For their part, it can safely be said that the Islamists have cornered themselves in the tightest position because of their rigid demands—cancellation of the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty, no to normalization, and call for electoral reform.

Indeed, it is now the government's turn to bask in the sun. They have succeeded, albeit unintentionally, to contain the Islamists, while running a free elections that have independent Islamists, leftists, nationalists and Baathists to contest seats for the next Lower House of parliament. ■



Jordan's apple farmers exhibit produce at annual fair

By Ibtisam Awdiat

Special to The Star

THE SECOND Annual Jordanian Apple Fair, organized by the National Center for Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (NCARTT), opened on Wednesday at the Professional Associations Complex.

More than 10 farmers are displaying no less than 50 types of apples that are now grown in Jordan at the three-day expo. NCARTT director Ismail Tweisai said the expo aims at encouraging organically raised apple trees. He added that NCARTT was against the use of chemical fertilizers.

The annual exhibition offers a rare chance for those who are interested in planting apples to examine the products and methods of local apple farmers. "Our target is to show those farmers the proper ways that should be used in arranging and packaging their products," Mr Tweisai said.

Also the center has prepared many working papers on methods and ways for planting, picking and packaging apples. Tweisai added that Jordanian apples can now compete with European apples and that farmers can become competitive if they if they adopt modern methods concerning planting and packaging. ■

The exhibition is not only displaying apples but today, Thursday it is going to mark the scientific day for apples to make farmers and consumers aware of modern methods used in growing and packing and finally marketing the produce.

Dr Kamel Al Radaydeh, a visitor and an apple farmer, said the fair is well organized. Another participant pointed that the main problem facing apple farmers in Jordan, mainly in the Shobak mountainous area, is foreign imports. Youssef Gheeth, a farm owner and a participant stressed "our local products can meet demand and we don't need imported apples to compete with our own." ■

Weekly newspapers take their case to court, political parties lash at government

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The High Court of Justice on Tuesday rejected a plea by seven weeklies to overturn the government's decision until a final hearing. The weeklies will have to wait until the court decides whether the government's decision was legal or not. The case will take no less than a month and may drag even longer.

Meanwhile, the Jordan Press Association has criticized the government's decision and accused it of failing to abide by its own law. It said that when the amended law was passed the JPA stood against it, but now it asks the government to stick to the letter of the law.

Article 24 of the law says weekly papers must have a registered capital of JD 300,000. Most of the weeklies were able to obtain certificates from the Ministry of Trade and Industry proving that their "registered" capital was indeed that sum.

In a meeting at JPA's headquarters this week, publishers and editors of the suspended papers promised to take the government to court. Mr Huss-

ein Mjall, president of the Jordanian Lawyers Association. Mr Najeeb Al Rashdan, president of the Arab Human Rights Organization in Jordan and a former chief of the Court of Cassation have agreed to represent the newspapers.

Opposition parties and other civic institutions have also come to the defence of the weeklies describing the government action as another blow to the democratic process and to the freedom of expression in the country. In a statement released to the press earlier this week, the 12-party opposition alliance described the suspension move as "a political decision" against the democratic process in the country. It said the move unveiled plans to pass other laws aimed at undermining political parties and professional associations in the country.

Under the law, suspended publications have until mid-November to comply or risk cancellation of their licenses. The political parties' newspapers were excluded from the

government decision. Only three party newspapers remain today: Al Nahdha of the National Constitutional Party, Al Jamaheer of the Communist Party, Al Ahad of the leftist People's Democratic Party.

"I think that the government should have been much more patient, the exercise should have been given more time," said Mr Ibrahim Izzeddin, a former minister of information. He added that "you cannot solve the problems of the freedom of the press by imposing new laws." Mr Izzeddin, who had a hand in drawing up the Press and Publications Law of 1993, believes that dialogue between the government and the press is essential to solve problems.

"I think the freedom of the press is something that you have to take in its totality," he said. "I strongly believe that the government's decision... laws any laws would not, at the end of the day, determine the position of the press, [or its] freedom which is always determined by society itself, by the limitations of society and by the limitations that could be imposed on the press by the society itself."

According to Mr Nidal Mansour, editor-in-chief of Al Haddath weekly, editors are optimistic that the court will stand by the weekly press. "We will not give up," Mansour said.

The suspension decision coincided with moves by a group of Jordanian journalists to establish a media institution whose objective is to protect

the freedom of the press and help in developing the journalistic profession. The Arab Media Institution, an independent non-governmental body, publishes a monthly newsletter focusing on local and Arab media, press freedom.

Founder of the Arab Media Institution, Mr George Hawatmeh, described the recent move against the weekly press as "iragic" because "we in Jordan who are trying to democratize and open up to the world should not resort to such legislations [the temporary press law]."

"We all know that there are problems, but I think the advantages that we had in having weekly newspapers, even the tabloid ones, were much bigger than the disadvantages," Mr Hawatmeh, who is also the Editor-in-Chief of the daily Jordan Times, said.

"You can not isolate freedom of the press from the general political and economic problems that we are facing," he added. "I think there should have been every effort on the part of the government and the press to realize that we were heading towards a collision course and that it should have been avoided."

The solution, as Mr Hawatmeh sees it, is that "the government should understand that although there are problems that accompany democratic growth and development, the best way to handle them is to look at the positive results that are achieved and not to focus on the negative aspects." ■

Life goes on without the tabloids!

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has gone before. The problem with the tabloids is that they were everything to everybody. Political opposition found refuge in their pages after being chased away by the more "responsible" dailies. But those very same pages offered stories about sex, crime, violence and all the unorthodox things that we never thought could happen in our midst. In fact many of them did not happen in our midst. But who cares?

Not all of them had stooped that low. But publishers wanted to sell more copies and issues and events dictated editorial policies. One can say that readers used the tabloids as much as the tabloids used the readers. The tabloids were bought to entertain on tedious bus rides home—but they were never allowed into the home. They were read by university students during recess, but always ended up in the trash can. These were not the kind

of "reference" material that people kept for good information. They were as disposable as tissue paper, watermelon seeds, matchboxes and baby diapers. If anything, they instilled zest into an otherwise prosaic and predictable life.

But some tried to be faithful to a message, an ideal—or so they portrayed themselves to be. The fact is some were living in the sixties while others were not living at all. Some wanted to ride the wave, while others were looking for a wave to ride.

So why make them into martyrs? If the tabloids were still alive today they would have speculated, predicted, judged and prejudged. No one likes to see a paper forced to fold, so how about 13 papers at one go? Right or wrong, the tabloids had become part of our lives like 2 pm traffic jams and Friday outings on the Airport Road. Will they be missed? Nothing lasts forever. Jordanians must try to cope and life goes on! ■



● There is no greater gift to present to the future generation than a clean and healthy environment. On 26 September, Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan joined the Clean Up the World Campaign initiated by the Jordan Environment Society (JES) to try and deliver that gift. Employees of the hotel brought their families and headed to Dibein to give an extra hand in collecting tons of solid waste (plastic goods, bottles, cans, paper, etc.). The campaign was an opportunity for organizations to build awareness on the importance of protecting the environment. Inter-Continental Hotels across the world have developed environmentally friendly approaches in almost all their departments. In maintaining an eco-conscious staff, Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan has many in-house programs such as recycling, waste control, and electricity conservation.

Israeli, Palestinian leaders agree to resume peace talks

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Abbas agreed that any "time-out" should last for the duration of the final status talks, which could be a year or less or could drag on for decades. But she said that there was no agreement on what the timetable should encompass. A senior US official said later that—although Israel had not committed itself to a freeze on settlements, land confiscation and

other measures the Palestinians regard as provocative—Israeli leaders realize that they will have to take such steps if the final status talks are to succeed. Nevertheless, officials conceded that the Palestinians had wanted a more specific Israeli commitment on settlements than they were able to obtain. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

A Piano Recital

Noor Al Hussein Foundation
The National Music Conservatory
Presents



A Piano Recital
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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

It's unbelievable... They should have another desk to put these ugly things on!



More NCP resignations

They are at it again and in droves. This week another 25 members of the National Constitutional Party resigned from the Aqaba and Karak branches. What is disturbing, at least to NCP followers, is that these members held leadership positions in these areas. Their departure comes soon after the resignations of top boss Akef Al Fayez and another batch of 25 members from the Irbid area last week. Those who submitted their resignations, in a letter to the General Secretary of the NCP Mr Abdel Hadi Al Majali, expressed dismay at what they described as "individualism, monopoly, authoritarianism, and condescension" within the framework of the party. To top it all, the head of the political section of party in the Jerash branch also resigned this week.

What, another one!

It is nice to know that there is zeal left in the Jordanian party political system. Despite the splits, the breakaways and anguish, there are still people who are willing to give it a go. The Jordanian Labor Party is right now under formation, and just waiting for the Interior Ministry to give it the go ahead. According to its Secretary General, Mazen Al Khataibeh, the party, which has a 100 founding members and is based in Irbid believes in development, peace and service to the nation.

Gang caught in Zerqa

Police caught a gang of car thieves that has been operating in the Zerqa area since 1984. The gang of three is accused of stealing tens of cars since the three members became open for business! The gang was finally caught red handed. The police said that after stealing a vehicle, the thieves would dismantle the car and sell it as spareparts.

September rains...

As usual it seemed that people were not prepared for the rain that fell on the country. Last Sunday, and in just one day, a total of 150 cars collided on Jordan's wet and slippery roads. These resulted in the deaths of eight people and at least 100 injuries. Although road accidents were reported all over the Kingdom, one of the worst occurred in Jerash where a bus accident killed five people and injured 45.

Murder in Al Ashrafiya

An unidentified man has stabbed and killed a 16-year old pupil near his school in Al Ashrafiya before running away. Police are still looking for the assailant. The reason behind the attack is still unknown.

Trade Union Federation rejects Histadrut overtures

It seems that the Israeli labor organization, the Histadrut, has been hot on the heels of its Jordanian counterpart to establish relations. The Jordanian Federation of Trade Unions says that they have been inundated with letters and faxes from the Histadrut inviting them to "normalize" relations. Speaking to the UAE-based Al Itihad, Jordanian federation member Omar Al Saraiheh, said the federation has ignored all these overtures and that it has rejected meeting any Israeli delegation which has come to Jordan.

Water aid

A US government grant agreement providing \$10 million for the water sector Jordan was signed at the Ministry of Planning, earlier this week. The grant, together with the \$53.5 million this year, will be used to develop and implement urgently needed water activities with the Ministry of Water. Activities included are the design and construction of improved water facilities in the Jordan Valley, Aqaba, and the restructuring and rehabilitation of the Greater Amman water supply system. This aid will also help Jordan convey increased quantities of "peace water" through the Jordan Valley to population centers and to finance other mutually agreed upon priority activities in the water sector.

Jerusalem Day

The eighth conference on the Jerusalem Day will be held between 4-7 October. Titled "Arab Jerusalem: Key to Peace," the venue includes seminars, a book and a photographic exhibition, and a folkloric evening. Seminars tackling such issues include property rights and the methods of confiscation since 1948.

Islamic-Christian cooperation

The economic issue and Arab support of the strategic role of Jerusalem. Experts who are speaking at the sessions include Taher Al Masri (former Prime Minister), Eugene Cotran (a UK judge and board member of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights), Anis Al Qassem, Raouf Abu Jaber, and Fadil Al Nageeb (economics professor from Waterloo University in Ontario, Canada), and Salim Al Hoss (former Lebanese Prime Minister). Ibrahim Izzaldin (present Secretary General of the Shoman Foundation and former government minister), and Munir Hamameh (economics professor at the University of Jordan).

Samir Al Rifai remembered

A seminar will be held on the late Jordanian Prime Minister Samir Al Rifai at the Royal Cultural Center on 8 October. Mr Rifai was a Prime Minister in the early 1950s at a time when Jordan and the region were going through turbulent changes. Three sessions will be held. These include papers about the man, the politician and the parliamentarian. Other papers are on the educational system in Jordan and on the Palestinian issue. Prominent Jordanian personalities such as Akef Al Fayez, Hazem Nusseibeh, Nasser Al Din Al Asad, Khalid Al Zoubi and Muhammad Masalha will participate in the one-day event.



Al Masri



His Majesty King Hussein visits Zerqa, Tuesday. In a rally in which thousands of people turned out, the King praised the people of the second largest city in the Kingdom. Addressing the city's major urban and environmental problems, His Majesty said "We will not allow the governorate of Zerqa to become a dumping place for refuse." During the rally which was attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor, King Hussein added that "Zerqa's needs are numerous but these will assume priority in the coming days so that our children can enjoy a healthy environment, safe from the danger caused by the poison that is being emitted into the atmosphere that is infiltrating water and negatively affecting farmland."

Flood of visitors threatens to take bloom off Jordan's rose-red city

By Osama El-Sherif

MENTION JORDAN to an experienced European traveler and you will probably get a brief lecture on Petra, the 1200-year-old red-rose Nabatean city carved entirely out of solid rock. Discovered in the late 1800s by a Swiss explorer, Petra's real comeback from the annals of Middle Eastern history is only happening today.

It is Jordan's Giza Plateau, yielding exciting new finds almost every month, from Roman palaces to Byzantine churches with breathtaking mosaic floors preserved in their original state.

It is no wonder that Petra has become the jewel in the crown of Jordan's tourist attractions—and they are many.

Jordan has been described by archaeologists as a natural museum with ancient sites littering the landscape from Aqaba on the Red Sea in the south to Um Qais, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, in the north.

In recent years the tourism sector's contribution to the national economy increased steadily to about 11 percent of the GNP. Nothing beats a visit to Petra, which many antiquity experts consider as the eighth wonder of the world.

And this is precisely why Jordan's tourism promotion efforts have been dedicated to telling the world about Petra. These efforts have been increasing since Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. Since the border posts between Jordan and Israel were opened in that year, thousands of Israelis have been crossing into Jordan, through the southern border point near Aqaba, to make the full day trip to Petra about a hundred kilometers to the north.

Between 1995 and 1996 no less than 220,000 Israelis visited Jordan, the great majority of whom went to Petra.

But Jordanian tourist operators are dismayed that most of the Israeli tourists, who are sponsored by Israeli tour agencies, descend on Petra for the day, bringing along their own food and water bottles, and leave for Israel in the evening. Jordan's tour operators have called on the government to close the southern border point so that Israeli tourists will be forced to enter Jordan through the northern crossing point and stay for a day or two in the kingdom.

But in addition to Israeli tourists, peace has brought many European, American and even Japanese tourists to Jordan. Petra is the main attraction on their itinerary. In recent years the number of visitors to the red-rose city has more than tripled. Figures show that more than 400,000 tourists of all nationalities came to Petra in 1996 and this year the figure may reach half a million.

For the 12,000 inhabitants of the once sleepy town of Wadi Musa, just few kilometers from the ancient ruins, the influx of tourists is a blessing from heaven. Until four years ago, Petra had only



Entrance to the Siq. Previously horses went through this path. However, in the interest of environmental protection, such entry is disallowed today, but some argue that ecological hazards continue.

two tourist hotels, one of which belonging to an international chain. But since then at least 10 new hotels have sprung up, with more still under construction. The price of land has, understandably, shot up in key locations from \$1000 per dunnum (1000 square meters) to almost \$50,000 per dunnum.

Much of the new investments in Jordanian tourism has been pouring into the Wadi Musa area and this has created problems, mainly in infrastructure expansion and requirements, as well as opportunities.

But the steady stream of incoming tourists is not all good news for Petra enthusiasts among them concerned archaeologists and the Petra Trust Foundation, which has been trying to regulate the flow of tourists who enter the city everyday through its only entrance, a narrow, winding alley, three kilometers long, called the siq. They believe the influx of tourists will damage the fragile Petra environment. Already the Petra Trust has succeeded in convincing the government to ban the entry of horses, a very popular and romantic method of site-seeing, into the siq—to the dismay of Wadi Musa residents who made a living from offering tourists a horse-back ride into the ruins.

The Petra Trust is also getting involved in the process of issuing building permits, especially for hotels, close to the ruins. They believe infrastructural work, like sewage and water networks, will eventually affect the ancient city.

But for the government, Petra is a source of much needed foreign currency. Political pressure, applied by influential businessmen, land owners and deputies, has in many cases succeeded in overruling Petra Trust recommendations.

Petra enthusiasts warn that lack of long-term planning will hurt Petra and they point to the case of Jerash, 60 kilometers north of Amman. Every July and for the last 16 years, Jerash, one of the famous Roman decapolis cities in the ancient Middle East,

receives hundreds of thousands of visitors who flock to its famous colonnaded streets and amphitheaters to witness the activities of the Jerash Festival for Art and Culture.

Critics believe the human stampede, which occurs every night for three weeks, has caused the city's monuments more damage than the erosion factors of time and wind of the last thousand years. Archaeologists tend to agree.

The cases of Jerash and Petra put government planners, who would like to see Jordan becoming a magnet for tourists and their precious dollars, and those concerned for the state of Jordan's antiquity and its environment on a collision course.

With the concept of ecotourism now gaining ground in Jordan, the government is feeling the heat as it unveils a \$500 million dollar plan to turn the port city of Aqaba into a regional resort town, with a man-made lagoon, 12 new hotels, golf courses and other attractions. Environmentalists warn that these expansions will bring irreparable damage to Aqaba's coral reefs and pollute the sea.

In its search to attract foreign investments, promote tourism and preserve antiquity and the environment, Jordan is looking for clues and answers. One area where a delicate balance was found is in the Wadi Dana natural reserve, about 70 kilometers north of Petra.

In this vast and breathtaking valley with natural rock formations, eagles soar high in the sky and the rare ibex nestles on the rugged hills. Bird watchers are now coming to this secluded valley from Europe and the United States. But the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature is not taking any chances.

Only 170 visitors are allowed each day into the vast reserve and are kept to beaten tracks. For the reserve keepers and visitors alike, a delicate balance between the pressures of development

and ecological concerns could be found. Many believe a similar balance can be found for Petra.

This article was originally written for the Boston-based WorldPaper

Press cocktail

Edited by Raed Al Abied

The peace concerns of Prince Hassan

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan stressed the need for a united Arab stand to face the recent challenges. In an interview with the Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC), Prince Hassan said "In the absence of inter-Arab consultations and a united Arab stand it is impossible to pass judgement on Israel's continued occupation of Arab lands, the demolition of Arab homes and the building of settlements in the Arab territories."

However, Prince Hassan maintained that "we cannot ruin the last chance we have to achieve peace...we must neither allow passions to take control nor allow outlaws to have the upper hand." Replying to a question about people blaming Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu for the terrorist acts, the Prince said "If Netanyahu is the cause of all these acts, we must not give him further justification to refrain from honoring the commitments towards peace."

Despite the fact that there is a difference between the stands and policies of Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, on the one hand, and Netanyahu, on the other, the Prince believes there is hope. "The majority of people in Jordan, Israel and Palestine are actually seeking an end to the nightmare. Although we are witnessing renewed acts of violence, we can see light at the end of the tunnel."

In the light of the increasing tension in the region, Prince Hassan did not exclude the possibility of war. He said that "Our region is witnessing various conflicts which might develop into a bigger war covering a wider area." Therefore, he added "we must use our minds and conscience, intensify our contacts and consultations and increase our contacts with the outside world for the sake of attaining justice."

He believes the only exit out of the crisis in the region is "the return of the spirit of the Madrid conference and the Madrid concept for a comprehensive peace," and "the principle of exchanging land for peace." He called on the US to "listen to all parties."

The Crown Prince stressed the necessity for the Arab rulers meetings "in order to work towards a solution and rekindle hope, not for ourselves as rulers but rather for the children and the generations to come." He reminded that "the Jews have worldwide influence in various institutions of the world including banks and other organizations. We have to use our minds and intensify our contacts and coordination during this stage until we reach a better situation."



The Star
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly
Online

<http://www.arabia.com/star>

The beauty of horses glow in latest exhibition

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

ALI AL MI'MAR is one of the very few truly excellent painters of horses in the world today. On the occasion of the Arabian Horse Festival '97 HRH Princess Alia bint Al Hussein opened his horse painting exhibition.

Al Mi'mar is a distinctive artist. His love for horses can be seen in the plastic paintings that are on display. His meticulous detail, and brush strokes make the paintings so real to life that you feel that the horses are about to leap out from the canvases.

Al Mi'mar, born in Baghdad and graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts, studied painting under the guiding hand of the Iraqi pioneer artist Faig Hassan who especially painted horses and deserts.

"I was so impressed by my teacher, but that doesn't mean I didn't paint other subjects, however I am very much interested in painting horses," he tells The Star.

In Al Mi'mar's paintings you notice and touch the humanitarian feel. In this respect, Ali steers away from the traditional style saying "I paint the horse from a humanitarian angle like the maternal relationship between the horse and her foal, these emotions of course also apply to human beings."

Al Mi'mar is an established painter. His first exhibition, held in Baghdad in 1985, was followed by displays in Amman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.



His works are also available through private collections in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, the United States of America, Japan, Qatar and Jordan.

The Arabian horse is renowned internationally for its power and capacity to resist the harsh conditions of the desert where it is born and bred. Ali points out "The body of the Arabian horse is well shaped and harmonious, with wide eyes and a beautiful head. The Arabian horse, the artist adds, has other internal qualities such as fidelity, patience and love for its owner, but don't forget also that the Arabian horse is of a noble origin."

This is his fourth exhibition in Jordan and all were opened by Princess Alia. "This gener-

ous action encouraged me a lot and gave me extra push to continue working," Al Mi'mar comments.

He stayed in the royal stables for quite a while, studying and photographing in order to achieve his purpose and employ the horse in his paintings to bring out its social or even political aspects.

Pointing to a picture, he asks who will be the horseman, adding "in this one you see a horse with its saddle looking towards Jerusalem."

Al Mi'mar always takes part in horse competitions. Last March he was in Qatar where he organized his exhibition. His present exhibition in the Orient Gallery in Shmeisani continues till 5 October.

Lurie's NewsCartoon



Our Say...

Preventing a looming disaster

THE DRAMATIC events of the past few days, beginning with the attempt on the life of a Hamas political leader in Amman and culminating with Wednesday's release by Israel of Shiekh Ahmad Yassin, will require some time and deep analysis in order to evaluate their direct impact on the stalled Middle East peace process in general and on Jordan's relations with Israel in particular.

While Israel's responsibility for the attempted assassination of Khaled Mashal has not been made public yet, it is clear that the prime suspect, if not the only one, is Israel's intelligence apparatus, the Mossad. Israel alone has the motive and means to carry out such an operation. The failed attack joins a list of recent botched attempts to eliminate prominent Hamas and Hizbollah leaders in Palestine, Lebanon and now Jordan.

The fact that the Israeli Mossad has become active on Jordanian soil is a dangerous precedent, one which is condemned by all Jordanians. This is precisely why His Majesty King Hussein reiterated in Zarqa this week that the safety of Jordanian citizens is his utmost concern. Earlier he also warned that Jordan will not become a base for terrorist attacks.

It is clear that Israel holds nothing sacred—including agreements and treaties with its peace partners. The attack on Mashal is a violation of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and is an aggression by a foreign party against Jordanian citizens on Jordanian soil.

Having said this, the King in his wisdom and farsightedness sought to defuse a potentially explosive crisis, one that was threatening to renew the cycle of violence which Israel and Israeli citizens could have easily become one of its prime targets.

Israel understood the clear meaning of the King's speech in Zarqa on Tuesday and responded—since it had very few choices—by releasing the invalid spiritual leader of Hamas, Shiekh Ahmad Yassin and another Palestinian prisoner. We all know that Israel would not have made such a unilateral move unless it felt itself cornered.

The release of Shiekh Yassin will help defuse the tension between Hamas and Israel—for the time being at least. It will also help spare the region from a series of reprisals against which Israel will stand defenseless.

The events of the past week have proven once and again that the people and the leaders of this region cannot trust the current Israeli leadership. The present stalemate in the Middle East peace process owes much of its illness to the intransigence of Benjamin Netanyahu and his reckless policies which promises to bring death and destruction not only to the Arabs but to Israelis as well.

There is a lesson in the events of the past week. Prudent and responsible policies, such as those carried out with courage by King Hussein, are exactly what we need at this stage to prevent a looming disaster from taking place. Netanyahu stands naked and alone at this point of time.

Will there be life after Arafat?

By Patrick Cockburn

HIS AIDES say robustly that "he is as strong as a horse," but since Yasser Arafat injured his head when his plane crashed in a sandstorm in Libya in 1992 he has suffered from black-outs. In recent weeks, as the stalemate in negotiations with Israel continues, he has looked increasingly haggard and depressed.

If Mr Arafat does die, he has no obvious successor as either Palestinian leader or national symbol. Even at the nadir of his fortunes, after his expulsion from Beirut by Israel in 1982, attempts to replace him have never looked like succeeding.

The only two Palestinian leaders who approached him in prestige have both been assassinated in the last 10 years. Khalil Wazir (Abu Jihad) was killed by an Israeli team in Tunis in 1988. Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad)

was killed three years later by one of his own body guards working for Abu Nidal, the Palestinian guerrilla leader.

Constitutionally Mr Arafat should be replaced—though he himself apparently disputes this—by Ahmed Qureia (Abu Ala) the speaker of the Palestinian parliament. There would then be a presidential election. A candidate favoured by the US and Israel is Abu Mazen, the negotiator of the Oslo accords, but neither he nor Abu Ala are popular figures.

Mr Arafat would also be difficult to replace because he is the only member of the leadership in exile in Tunis, which returned to Gaza in 1994, who was acceptable to the 2.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

The same division between "outsiders" and "insiders" also probably disqualifies Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi,

both of whom are popular. The most likely development, in the short term, would be a collective leadership of politicians and security men, with neither predominating.

It is not easy to run a resistance movement in the Middle East. The main Iranian opposition to the Iranian regime, for example, has ended up as a castaway of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader. In contrast the Palestinian leader has avoided becoming anybody's pawn.

Though dictatorial, he is not bloodthirsty, never eliminating his Palestinian opponents. Mr Arafat's career has been studded with defeats, but he has usually played with a weaker hand than his opponents. His ability to recuperate stems from his refusal to go against the stream of Palestinian opinion, whatever the urgings of Washington and the rest of the world.

The Independent

Letter from the Levant

Jordan's beleaguered press: A purge or clean-up?

By Osama El-Sherif

THE JORDANIAN government has carried out what has been termed as the biggest press "clean-up" in the history of the Kingdom. It ordered 13 publications, mostly weekly newspapers, to suspend publication for failing to comply with an article in the new press law, promulgated last May. The article calls for a hefty raise in the weeklies' "registered" capital—from a mere JD 15,000 to JD 300,000. Almost all of the suspended publications appeared in 1993 or after, under the now amended press law, which at the time of its adoption by Parliament was considered one of the most liberal in the region.

When it passed the controversial amendments in May, Jordanian journalists were joined by opposition political parties and professional unions in calling for their nullification. No matter what the government said to defend its position, the press body was united in describing the move as a set-back for press freedom and as an attempt to muzzle and eventually purge the press—especially the outspoken weeklies.

The government countered that it only wanted to curtail abuses of press freedom and regulate a chaotic press industry. It said the amendments did not in any way impinge on freedom of press and expression. Theoretically, at least, that could be true, especially since "press violations" can only be judged so in a court of law.

The affluence of the weekly press in Jordan was a by-product of ambitious democratic reforms in the country, launched in earnest since the resumption of democratic life in Jordan in 1989.

Under the 1973 press law, licensing of newspapers was restricted by the government and suspending or withdrawing licenses was a matter subject to the personal whims and fancies of the minister of information. Publishers could not contest these arbitrary decisions in court.

But the 1993 press law changed all this. Any Jordanian could apply for a license and actually begin publishing if the government does not respond in 30 days.

As a result a torrent of new titles, mostly weekly papers, flooded the small Jordanian market. According to figures no less than 40 licenses were granted between 1993 and 1997. This included papers belonging to newly licensed political parties. In a matter of few

months, since the liberal press law was passed, Jordanians had free access to publications mirroring and voicing all sorts of political, social and cultural ideas; from the conservative Islamist press to the left-wing Baathist and pan-Arabist newspapers. At one time the variety of opinions in the Jordanian press was the most prominent example of political pluralism. And for a precious period it appeared that all opinions, no matter how extreme, were tolerated by the government.

But the same political and legislative process allowed a new kind of journalism to appear and flourish: sensational tabloids which thrived by selling sex, murder and scandal material. The birth of the "tabloid press" sent shock waves in a small and tightly-knit society whose social fabric was now coming under pressure.

It is an accepted fact that while the more established daily press remained somehow aloof and conservative in dealing with political and social challenges, the more liberal weeklies made the best of the new democratic environment. Many intellectuals accused the daily press of not doing enough to develop itself and fill a growing gap in the now competitive readership market. Jordanians became avid readers of weekly newspapers that published stories on official corruption and became a platform for those opposing peace and normalization of relations with Israel.

While the 1993 law provided penalties for violations such as slander, sedition and others, the government felt that such punishments, which needed court authority to be implemented, were lenient and that the law itself was ambiguous. The government took many newspapers, mostly weeklies, to court and while it won on occasions, it found itself embroiled in fruitless legal battles most of the time.

Meanwhile the weekly press continued to challenge government policies, especially with regard to the peace process and relations with Israel, until it became apparent that a crisis was looming for the Jordanian



Jordan's flourishing press scene would now be down to a trickle!

press. Many journalists and intellectuals warned that the outcome of a direct confrontation between the "troublesome" weeklies and the government will have negative repercussions for the entire profession.

That crisis culminated in the passage of the controversial amendments, which were taken in the absence of Parliament, and whose main objective, as explained by the government, was to put an end to irresponsible excesses, while publishers and opposition parties said it was aimed at purging the press.

The weeklies plan to take their case to court—and may even win it over the legal interpretation of the article pertaining to capital requirement. But that would take weeks if not months—precisely the pause the government needs to conduct an important parliamentary election in November away from the meddling of the weekly press.

Once the elected body convenes, the government will be expected to submit the temporary law for ratification. In the process it may choose to close certain legal loopholes, and set about to deal with the fall-out that might come from a legal battle with the weeklies.

The "clean-up" process requires a quiet revision of the developments of the past five years. The press body should continue to fight for press freedom and a responsible and objective journalism. But it should also examine the dangerous phenomenon of the proliferation of scandal sheets and sensational press.

The process of reform is two-fold. At one level, the press body should create its

own internal regulatory tools and codes; in the form of a higher press council and a general press and ethics code. Such internal regulations should safeguard the profession from the damage that it could sustain from unacceptable excesses that threaten national unity, traditional values, personal privacy among others. There is nothing new about the idea of creating such regulatory bodies. They already exist in many of the most open societies such as Britain where only last week the independent Press Complaints Commission decided, after consulting with leading British editors, to issue regulations to curb media harassment and paparazzi hounding of public figures.

The second level involves legislation. Laws are not static and in a country such as Jordan, where a process of democratic transition is still nascent, constant legislative reforms are not necessarily bad omens. Again, the press body could impress upon the government to study the experiences of countries that have sophisticated press laws and regulations such as France and Germany.

The "purge" or "clean-up" of the weekly press in Jordan, whether one approves of it or not, should not be the end of the road for the Jordanian press which has added color and substance to Arab media in general. As the dust settles, the government, which keeps repeating that it is still committed to press freedom, and the press body should create a forum to resolve the current crisis and limit its damage to Jordan's image and standing.

Terror the world ignores

By David Hirst

ALGERIA is a country in the grip of terror. In the past three months as many as 1,800 civilians have been murdered—many brutally burned, dismembered or having their throats slit within a few miles of the capital, Algiers. In the past three weeks alone nearly 1,000 people have died violently.

The massacres have gone largely unreported in the Western press. Only recently the Vatican denounced the West's "ice-cold indifference to the unprecedented abyss of death."

Yet the West goes on trading and dealing normally with Algeria. France's government publicly supports the government of President Liamine Zoulat and gives it soft loans. The IMF praises the economy. The country is earning huge revenues from the high prices it can command for its oil and gas from Europe. Investment is flowing in: it is business as usual.

The true extent of the slaughter can only be guessed at. It is too dangerous for foreign journalists to work effectively. More than 50 have been killed in the past five years. It is thought that as many as 100,000 civilians have been executed since 1992.

The latest massacre took place at the Bentahia neighbourhood of Baraki, an eastern suburb of Algiers. At least 200 residents died and another 100 were wounded in what survivors described as scenes of unimaginable butchery. The slaughter began last Monday evening. "The killers arrived around midnight," said one resident. A first group of assailants systematically laid mines and traps round the houses. "They set a fire around the area and threw grenades into houses to force sleeping people to come out."

By now the attackers had swollen to about 40. Having forced their helpless captives out into the open they set about the slaughter in a serious, yet reportedly leisurely fashion, slicing their victims' throats. As they retreated after what was said to be four hours of mayhem, the murderers torched the houses, leaving behind them complete devastation: blackened buildings, floors awash with blood, mixed with ashes.

"A lot of women were kidnapped," said one survivor. "That's why there were no many females among the dead and wounded."

Afterwards a wave of panic swept the area and traffic jams built up as people



Mourning the victims!

rushed towards Bentahia seeking news of relatives. No one has claimed responsibility for the atrocity—and a bomb, attack in the town of Reghaia, 19 miles east of Algiers—but Bentahia is considered a stronghold of the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA). The relatively moderate Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), with whose leader the regime has been con-

ducting talks, denounced the attack.

The attacks have hitherto been confined to provincial regions. With the underground militants, presumably members of the GIA, now carrying out their atrocities near army barracks, Algerians wonder whether President Zeroual's army-backed regime is about to be overwhelmed, or whether it is about to be torn apart by a power struggle between its moderates and extremists.

President Zeroual himself believes in some kind of dialogue with the Islamist opposition, but hardline generals want to destroy it altogether. At all events, it is clear that the conflict is now entering a new, atrocious phase.

The latest massacre came as a swift and savage rebuff to the claim by the prime minister, Ahmad Ouabou, only the day before that the government is breaking the back of the terror. While admitting that attacks had made August "the blackest month since 1994" he made the now ritual assurance that only "remnants of terror" remain to be mopped up.

Algeria's bloody and barbaric civil war is one of almost indecipherable complexity. It is much more than a straight fight between the hardline military "eradicators" and the fanatics of the GIA. Three other violent conflicts are also unfolding within the ruling elite itself, within the Islamist insurrection and between broad segments of a society caught up in the tribal and popular vendettas which the other conflicts have unleashed.

The regime itself is now witnessing infighting after the moderates began a dialogue with the FIS, which has distanced itself from the horrific excesses of its GIA rivals. The regime recently released the FIS "historic chief", Abbas Madani.

But, as so often before when compromise is in the air, the "eradicators" led by General Muhammad Lamari, the chief of staff, sought to sabotage it.

The fact that Madani's release was swiftly followed by his rearrest was seen as a sign of the gravity of this internal power play the "eradicators" have an effective accomplice in the Islamic fanatics. Dialogue between the regime and moderate Islamists is usually a signal for them to step up their massacres—which are grist to the mill of the generals.

The Guardian

Middle East Beat
by Khairi Janbek
Spill-over!

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS in our region tend to shift very quickly and without prior notice. The precarious battle lines, are replaced by the battle lines of peace. This indicates clearly that peace cannot be taken for granted, but rather fought for and cemented by commitment and tireless efforts.

The latest regional developments include Iranian military maneuvers (Zulfikar), the purchase of weapons by the Arab Gulf states, the constant state of American military preparedness, the Turkish campaign in the Kurdish areas prior to the setting of the winter season, the Israeli military training to perform specific tasks and duties, the boiling conditions in the PNA areas. To top it all, and also the gravest, is the recent violent events that have occurred on the streets of Amman.

Undoubtedly, complementarity as a notion in our region forces itself on us, but never for the purpose of mutual prosperity and stability. Inevitably, the arms race will lead at one point or another to conflict on a minor scale or even on a regional level. For the updating of weaponry is usually accompanied by higher stakes in ill-husory confidence, and an updating of causes and national aspirations that are likely to reflect half truths and disguise demagogic intentions.

A repeat performance of the First World War "Schlieffen Plan" shows that events may develop by their own logic, rendering situations out of hand. In the unfortunate event of my such sorrowful scenario in the Gulf region, the spill-over may involve highly sensitive countries, such as Turkey and Iran, as well as increase the probability of altering the delicate balance achieved between the United Nations and Iraq.

Of course, oil will play a major part in such a formula, and given the US commitment to keep the outflow of oil without any hindrance, it would probably be that the US will be dragged into heavier involvement in the region. The spill-over effect on the countries of the Middle East may lead to untold disasters.

The other dangerous spill-over is to allow the build-up of events and tension in the PNA-Israeli relations affecting Jordan and its stability. Our country has never been, and will never be a theater for operations of various conflicting groups trying to achieve their criminal aims on the land of Jordan. Our choice of democratic life, and the development of pluralistic society have never been intended to provide arenas, and forces for criminal gangs and groupings to battle out their differences in our streets.

Jordan is a self-respecting stable country, and is capable of defending its own social structure and political cohesion, and cannot allow political differences from whichever side to influence its chartered and well planned path. Without any doubt, a strong and stable Jordan is an asset to our Palestinian brothers in the PNA areas. It stands supporting their legitimate rights, and helping them to achieve their aspirations on their soil and with their independent decisions. It is also a signatory of a peace agreement with Israel, and an active and credible partner in the whole peace process.

At the critical point in the negotiations between the PNA and Israel, and the rising tension in the south of Lebanon, as well as the Turkish terrorist mopping up operations in Iraqi territories, Jordan is the focus point of consistency, and the safety valve for the whole area including the hinterland of the Arab oil states. Therefore, the enemies of Jordan are those same enemies of peace and the haters of stability for the whole of the Middle East.

It is time to consider our options clearly, and continue our path with determination, without giving any quarter to any side that works against the stability of Jordan.

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Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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GERMAN UNITY

Partnership projects enhance business ties between Germany and Jordan

AMMAN (Star)—As a result of increased international economic integration—negotiation of Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreements and establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO)—reciprocal support programs for business organizations and on the enterprise level are developed to facilitate the adaptation process for the business to international practices. In June 1996 the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHT) and the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI) signed a "Partnership Agreement" establishing a Jordanian German Partnership Project. This project aims at enhancing

the competence and efficiency of the Jordanian partner organization in its functions vis-a-vis its member enterprises as service unit and as representative and promoter of the interests of the industrial sector. Priority areas are the promotion of internationalization of the Jordanian industry, support in selected fields of technology and of consulting services to small and medium size companies.

DIHT is the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce with 85 German member Chambers in East and West Germany and a network of German Chambers of Commerce abroad. In the Middle East, the German Arab Cham-

ber of Commerce in Cairo with offices in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine and affiliate service companies are offering their wide range of support services to the internationally oriented business community in the region. The Amman Chamber of Industry is a well established business organization working on behalf of the Jordanian industries.

The Jordanian partnership project is administered by the Foundation for Economic Development and Vocational Training (SEQUA) and financed by the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ)

for a period of three years. SEQUA is a development agency and a non-profit organization of the German private sector. It was established in 1991. It is experienced in the promotion of economic development and vocational training in the reform countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the developing countries of the South. In the Middle East the organization is active in Palestine and Jordan so far. It pursues this aim in the framework of publicly funded projects and programs of international cooperation.

As a subsidiary of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHT), the German Confederation of Small Business and Skilled Crafts (ZDH) and the Confederation of German Employers' Association (BDA), SEQUA closely cooperates with German chambers, business organizations and training centers and their partners abroad. This network guarantees a direct exchange of experience and a demand-oriented transfer of know-how between German and foreign business organizations. It also reflects recent developments in the field of international cooperation as private enterprises and their representative bodies are increasingly involved in the implementation of business promotion programs.

In these partner countries SEQUA promotes the development of private sector organizations, such as chambers, business associations and training centers. Particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) benefit from the work of

these organizations, which not only represent private sector interests vis-a-vis government, but also offer a wide range of services to their members. Its project activities include consulting, training and contributions to equipment. It helps to construct vocational training centers and set up their institutional structure, provides equipment and trains trainers. Considering the rapidly changing requirements of the labour market, further training plays a vital role. The organization helps foreign partner organizations develop their own demand-oriented training programs.

Projects are jointly implemented by SEQUA and the respective German business organizations functioning as project partner. While the latter contributes its specific know-how and coordinates project activities with the partner abroad, SEQUA operates as service institution for public and private donors as well as for the German partner organization and its foreign counterpart. The projects and programs of SEQUA are usually funded by public donors. Presently, the Jordanian partnership project is funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). SEQUA projects are also financed by the European Union (EU), the Deutsche Ausgleichsbank, the German Ministry for the Interior (BMI), the Rudolf-Siedersleben'sche Otto Wolf Foundation, the German Ministry for Employment (BMA), the German Environment Office (UBA) and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). ■



Reconstruction program in eastern German is in full swing

Local companies must diversify says businessman

AMMAN (Star)—The responsibility to produce a high quality product or unique service by Jordanian industries relies on the competence of local establishments.

If such qualification is to exist, it is essential to adopt advanced modern scientific methods.

This is the target of the Arfan Establishment for Industrial Electrical Supplies.

"Our objective in establishing our firm came after a full understanding of the needs of the local market," says Arfan Al Takriti, director of the establishment.

He stresses that we plan to set complete production lines to avoid using foreign skills or manpower.

However, our industry is not capable of manufacturing spareparts for the production lines, machines or other industrial instruments, which are basic necessities, he adds.

This is due to the shortage of raw material which remains within the control of big industrialized countries. Such a fact features has reduced our industries into the "assembling" kind.

Though, reaching the competitive level with those countries remains difficult, there are internal factors that do effect the course of local industry.

"The manufactures themselves do not cooperate to diversify production lines among them, and we notice that duplication in products leads to recession in commodity," Al Takriti says.

Such a phenomenon also hinders creativity and blocks the way in front of variety in production.

Referring to competition among local companies operating in the electrical equipment supplies side, Al Takriti says that control doesn't exist on these companies, as some of them focus on profit rather than quality.

There is no room for comparison between



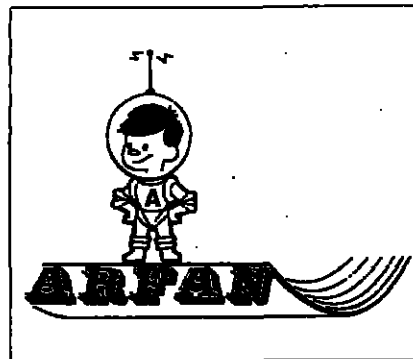
Al Takriti

industrial establishments which operate with qualified technical staff and engineers and bear the costs of premises, salaries, taxes and customs duties, with other workshops that practice their profession without license or promote second hand spareparts.

His establishment provides services including Variable Speed Drives & Soft Starts and PLC.

It also provides installations for electric boards, automatic partitions and Switch Boards (automatic and manual).

The establishment functions as agent and distributors for many European companies. ■



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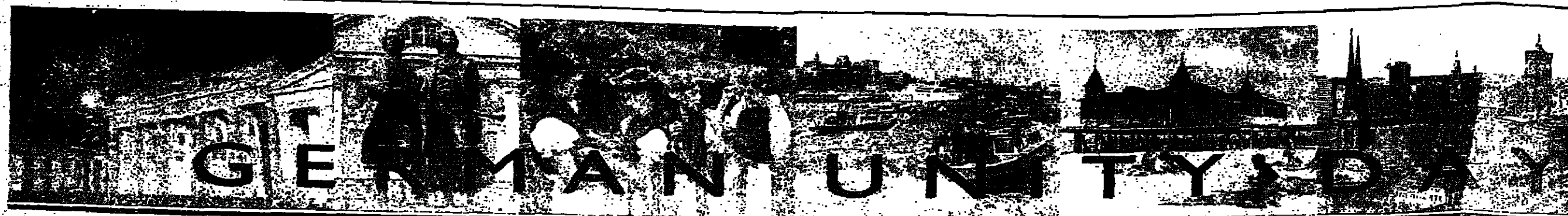
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مكتبة من الكتب



The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation

A partner to Jordan

By Olat Kondgen

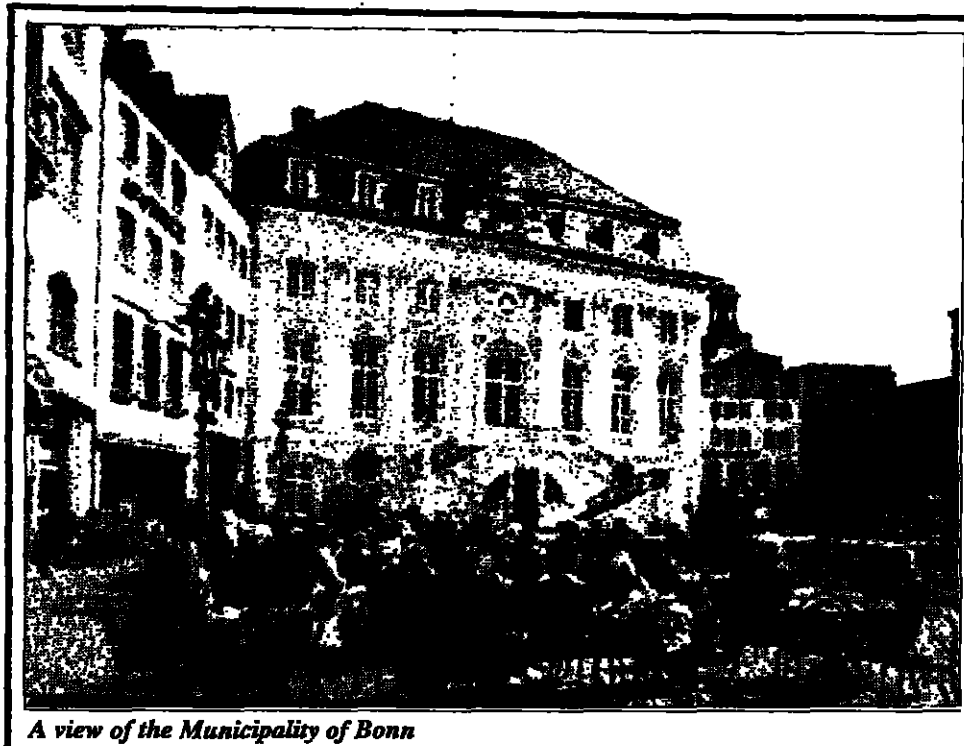
POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS constitute a base for the democratic political culture of Germany which has been developing since 1949. The establishment of political foundations was motivated by the belief that political education contributes to building and consolidating democracy. The different foundations' political-education activities cover all major political philosophies in the Republic of Germany. The history of the Weimar Republic, which never succeeded in winning over a majority of Germany's citizens, was an experience not to be repeated. The political foundations aim to motivate citizens both at home and abroad to play a role in shaping their political and societal environment.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAF), which is politically close to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), is one of five German political foundations. It has at its disposal an annual budget of more than 200 million Deutschmark which comes from various ministries. The KAF earmarks about half its financial resources to its international activities. The other half goes to the departments of "Political Education", "Research and Consultancy", "Scientific Services" and scholarships. It has more than 60 representations world-wide in more than 80 countries. Presently, the KAF has offices in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Israel and Turkey. The office in Tunisia carries out programs in Algeria, and the Jordan office is also active in Lebanon.

The Foundation's first long-term working partner in Jordan was the Ministry of Social Development. The first agreement, signed in 1981, with the then Minister Mrs. Inam Al Mufli, is renewed annually. At the center of our co-operation is the training of hundreds of men and women, primarily staff members of the Ministry's central administration, its directorates, its offices in the governorates and its different social development centers. This is in addition to the training of teachers and social workers in special education.

The objective of the training program is overhauling the trainees' basic knowledge, and upgrading their work qualifications. At the grass roots level, a more tailored approach toward individual citizens with a more personalized social interchange is being stressed.

Since 1987, a scheme of small income generating projects has been implemented and sponsored by the Foundation. Every year, in particularly disadvantaged areas in the north and south of the Kingdom, a group of some 10 poor but dynamic families have been carefully selected to benefit from the scheme on a credit basis. This represents the nucleus of a development movement which would reach beyond the group. Repayment of 100 percent, without interest, has to be completed after normally 5-7 years. It is a



A view of the Municipality of Bonn

revolving fund, administered by the Ministry, which allows for the extension of the annual projects or to begin supplementary ones. This project creates an important link of solidarity beyond the usual bonds of kin.

The Association of Community Centers, whose head office is located in Amman, has become the second long-term partner since 1983. Eight centers belong to this NGO registered with the Ministry of Social Development. All of them have been built at the initiative of CCA's mastermind Sari Nasser, a professor of sociology at the University of Jordan, and thanks to private donations.

This has been accomplished despite the resistance of traditional forces objecting to young men and women undertaking manual labor side by side.

An unmistakable approach to community work has been developed since the center in Hai Nazal started in 1977. Grass roots development from the bottom up and mobilizing self-help aimed at self-reliance. Every year two three-month courses are offered. Women are trained to become leaders in their communities, neighborhood associations and other community-based groups to initiate and continue small projects.

Another aspect of this program is vocational training in various (female) trades including computers. This is designed to increase job opportunities and thus the chances of a higher family income which is badly needed in urban quarters where the centers are based. The mother center in Hai Nazal has developed into an institution where staff members of private and public organizations get a practical introduction to social and development work.

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation is interested in all aspects that concern the development of Jordan society and strives to understand the determining factors behind it. By improving this understanding, the Foundation believes it can

contribute to close co-operation between the people of Jordan and Germany.

As a foreign organization, the Foundation has to ensure that its activities have been either initiated by local organizations or institutions and that its proposals have met with approval from within the country. Based on these principles, the Foundation organized a series of seminars and symposia since 1989, usually in conjunction with a local organization. In November 1992, in a symposium on "Democracy and the Rule of Law" dealing with questions of constitutional jurisdiction, two Jordanian lawyers and two German scholars, experts in these matters, led lively debates in which His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan participated actively. The seminar was attended by a range of people with varying interests.

The KAF is determined to support Jordan's path towards democracy. Proof of this is the symposium organized jointly with the General Federation of Jordanian Women and the University of Jordan, on the premises of the latter, in September 1993. The timely topic, 6 weeks before the multi-party elections for the Lower House of the Parliament, dealt with "The Role of Women in the

Democratic Process in Jordan".

Part of the preparations for this gathering, attended by hundreds of women, was the opinion poll conducted by Jordan University's Center for Strategic Studies on Jordanian Women's Participation in Political Life, which sampled 1,018 men and 1,032 women. A report on this poll constituted the first part of the symposium.

From its inception, the KAF has been a loyal partner to Jordan's ongoing democratization process. Numerous conferences and seminars with national and international participation have been held. To name a few: "Political Party Workshop" (1994), "The Role of the Media in a Democracy" (1994), "Electoral Legislation as the Foundation of a Democratic System" (1995), "Parliamentary Work: Realities and Prospects" (1995), "Women's Participation in the Democratic Development of the Jordanian Society" (1996), "The National Charter and the Democratic Development of Jordan" (1996), "Regional Economic Co-operation in the Mediterranean" (1996). Between 1994 and 1996 most seminars and conferences have been organized in close co-operation

Continued on page 8

New Munich trade fair opens in February

AFTER THE ground-breaking ceremony for the New Munich Trade Fair Center in 1994 and the laying of the foundation stone in June 1995, the roofing ceremony on June 1996 was the last major milestone before completion of this large construction project. The New Munich Trade Fair Center will open on 12 February 1998.

The need for a new trade fair grounds in Munich was obvious from the demand for exhibition space from the 1980s. The project's realization began in 1991. After an EU-wide competition for urban and landscape planning, ideas for the new town quarter of Riem had created the basis for the new trade fair grounds' location, a competition was held on the realization of the New Munich Trade Fair Center. In January 1992, an international jury awarded the first prize to the Danish office of architects BBP in Copenhagen. From 1993, a planning team of architects and engineers continued work on the New Munich Trade Fair Center.

Munich's new trade fair grounds are distinguished by their clarity and functionality. Future users—exhibitors and visitors—will benefit from the following:

- Support-less halls that permit maximum flexibility when planning. No other trade fair grounds in Germany have such ideal exhibition conditions.

- Highly flexible use due to easy divisibility of the entire grounds for parallel or overlapping trade events

- Equality of exhibition areas

- Good orientation throughout the grounds and in the halls for exhibitors and visitors alike

- An efficient visitor guidance system within the grounds

- Spacious loading and unloading zones.

- Efficient links with transport systems through two underground stations at the entrances West and East, two feeder roads to the motorway, and parking for some 13,000 cars

- Green open spaces and recreation areas within the grounds for exhibition and visitors.

The ICM—International Congress Center Munich for more than 6,500 people is integrated

into the new trade fair grounds. The facilities have been designed for flexible use. Rooms for 20 to 3,000 people are ideal both for events held in conjunction with trade fairs and for congresses and conferences held independently of trade fairs.

On 12 February 1998, the first stage of construction will have been completed and the new site of approx. 73ha will have a gross exhibition area of 140,000sqm in halls. In the second and final stage of construction, hall capacity will be extended to 200,000sqm. Outside the trade fair grounds, a further 18ha are earmarked as a special site for BAUNA and for parking.

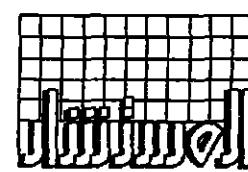
The western approach to the trade fair grounds will feature

attractive green open spaces and lakes, and the exhibition halls will be linked by a central atrium with planted areas for recreation and relaxation. The obvious functional advantages will complement the design to give the New Munich Trade Fair Center its individual appearance. The new trade fair grounds will also blend perfectly into the new town quarter of Riem.

Messe München was aware, from the start, of its environmental responsibility and, therefore, included ecological aspects in the planning of the New Munich Trade Fair Center. Although it was not obliged to do so by law, Messe München arranged for the planning and construction of the New

Munich Trade Fair Center to be accompanied by an environmental compatibility test. During the preliminary stages, several expertise were commissioned. Their results were included in both the planning and actual construction work.

As a result of the environmental compatibility test, 17 percent of the grounds, covering a total area of 73ha, were earmarked for green open spaces, including more than 2,000 large trees, approx. 70,000 appropriate bushes and smaller trees, plants for facades and some of the roofs. A ditch system for rainwater seepage will relieve the burden on the sewers at the trade fair grounds. ■



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Represented by its board of directors extends its warmest congratulations to the government and people of the Federal Republic of Germany on the occasion of

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Timing 1998 Munich International Trade Fairs

Events at the New Munich Trade Fair Centre

14-22/2/1998 - C-B-B-München: 29th Caravan-Best-International Travel Market Exhibition with opening week of the New Munich Trade Fair Centre

30/3-5/4/1998 - BAUMA: 25th International Trade Fair for Construction Machinery, Building Material Machines, Construction Vehicles and Equipment

21-24/4/1998 - ANALYTICA: 16th International Trade Fair and Analytical Conference for Analysis, Laboratory Technology, Diagnostics and Biotechnology

24-26/6/1998 - ELITEC: 20th Trade Fair for Electrical Engineering

8-12/7/1998 - INTERFORST: 8th International Trade Fair for Forestry and Log Timber Technology with Scientific Conferences and Special Shows and Displays

2-5/8/1998 - ISPO - Summer: 49th International Trade Fair for Sports Equipment and Fashion

26-30/9/1998 - IMEGA: 5th International Trade Fair for the Restaurant and Catering Industries and for the Food Trade

8-11/10/1998 - EXPOPHARM: International Pharmaceuticals Fair

19-23/10/1998 - SYSTEMS 98: 17th International Trade Fair and Congress for Information Technology and Telecommunications

30/10-1/11/1998 - MINERALIEN: 35th International Sales Exhibition (BORSE) and German Geological Trade Fair (GEOFA) for Minerals, Fossils, Crystals, Precious Stones, Specialized Literature and Accessories

10-13/11/1998 - ELECTRONICA: 18th International Trade Fair for Components and Assemblies in Electronics

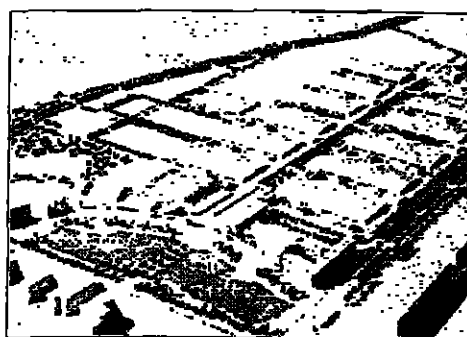
28/11-6/12/1998 - HEIM + HANDWERK: 21st Sales Exhibition for Building, Decoration and Interiors

Summer 1998 - IRANCONMIN '98: 3rd International Trade Fair for the Construction Industry, the Building-Materials Industry, and Mining (Technical management: MMG/IMAG), Tehran, Iran

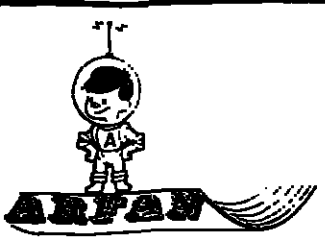
September 1998 - SIB 98: 7th International Trade Fair for Imports and Exports (Technical management: MMG/IMAG), Novosibirsk, Siberia

Information on other trade fairs outside Germany upon request.

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Directing Iran's foreign policy for a more open government

By Robin Wright

NEW YORK—In one way or another, Kamal Kharrazi has been the voice of Iran for most of the past two decades. Shortly after the 1979 revolution, he was named president of the Islamic Republic News Agency, Iran's sole news service. Shortly after Iraq's invasion in 1980, he became head of Iran's War Information Headquarters, the primary purveyor of developments in one of the century's gristliest conflicts. Kharrazi's impact in both jobs, held jointly for almost a decade, was so profound that he was rewarded with the job of Iran's voice in the outside world. He became ambassador to the United Nations in 1989. Last month, the US-educated envoy was rewarded once again. Kharrazi was named foreign minister, the voice of Iranian diplomacy, by Iran's new president.

In New York last week for the opening of the UN General Assembly and to pack up for the move back home, Kharrazi gave his maiden address as foreign minister—a speech watched closely and “somewhat favorably” by Washington, according to Clinton administration officials. “Progress of a pluralistic world with a great and ever-increasing variety of thoughts, ideas, beliefs, traditions and values depends on the promotion of tolerance and moderation,” he told the United Nations. The foreign policy of President Mohammed Khatami's new government “is founded on peace, self-restraint, confidence-building and reduction and elimination of tension.”

So soft-spoken that he is sometimes hard to hear, Kharrazi, 53, has moved into a variety of professions far afield from his doctoral studies in education at the University of Houston—and membership, in 1976, in the American Association of University Professors. Yet, he still delves into academic in his spare time, writing books in Persian on everything from the impact of chemical weapons to the strategies of learning, as well as articles in English for Harvard's Middle East Review.

Pressed about his hobbies, aides say the only activity they've ever seen him engage in is reading. “You could travel with him for 24 hours and not notice he was with you,” he's so quiet,” said one colleague. His neat beard tipped white and bespectacled, Kharrazi is also demure in dress. Like his wife, who wears traditional Iranian covering, he adheres to the revolution's male dress code—a short stand-up collar and no tie, the latter considered a symbol of the

West and its imposed culture.

As the voice of the new Khatami government, Kharrazi will be a key man to watch. US officials say, to see if Tehran's new policy of openness at home translates into foreign policy—and eventually leads to bridging the gap between the world Kharrazi once lived in and his homeland.

Question: In May, Iran held a presidential election. Mohammed Khatami upset the front-runner on the basis of fresh ideas—from the formation of multiple political parties to a free press. What does his election mean for Iran?

Answer: It's a very important point in Iranian political life. The atmosphere in Iran has changed. Over the next years, parties will be shaped and there will be more cultural activities, more newspapers and magazines in the market. As has been clearly said by our minister of culture, the approach he has is quite different from the last minister of culture. He thinks that through engagement, through openness and transparency, the Islamic culture can develop and play its role—not only in Iran, but also in the region and the world. Therefore, he emphasizes dialogues between civilizations and cultures. He encourages openness.

Do you anticipate, as a result of this openness, that there will be greater public debate about ideas, political as well as cultural?

Why not? I myself promoted this idea. I had a meeting with the chief editors of Iranian newspapers and encouraged them to criticize the foreign ministry. If you criticize, I learn, and I don't mind how much you criticize. Feel free and do your best. This is the policy of the government. Hopefully, it will be very helpful for the more successful operation of the government.

Two critical constituencies during this election were women and youth. Do you anticipate the government taking action to encourage the participation of women, perhaps to relax some of the restrictions on women and to bring more young people into government?

Yes, that is one of the policies of the new government: to give more roles for women and youth. One of the main principles of President Khatami [is] that women have the right to be more active in Iranian life. That's why he appointed a woman as his vice president and [why] he supports the activities of Iranian women to acquire their

rights in all aspects of society.

If you compared the status of women in Iranian society, it's much higher than other countries in that region. We have many Iranian women in Parliament. We have Iranian deputy ministers and women reporters, a lot of them. And women have the chance to work in the judiciary, especially in courts assigned to family issues and divorce. In universities, you find a lot of women professors, as well as students.

It is true that in the Iranian system, the Islamic dress code has to be observed. It is true some of them don't like the dress code. But if you ask women, many prefer Islamic dress because they find Islamic identity in that dress and they find it helpful to be respected, not to be harassed.

You spoke in your UN speech about “a dialogue among civilizations rather than a clash of civilizations.” Is this your way of saying that Islam and the West, and the ideas of the two societies, can co-exist and are compatible?

Sure, why not? This has been true all through the last centuries—that there has been cooperation between Islamic civilization and the Western civilization. This has to be continued. Why should there be a clash of civilizations? There should be cooperation and understanding between civilizations. That is really what we promote. President Khatami's idea about having a dialogue between civilizations, cultures and religions is a serious one.

You also spoke at the UN about the “expansion of relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect.” At the same time, there is improvement in the way Iran and the United States talk about each other. When you talk about expansion of relations with all countries, do you foresee this, in the not-too-distant future, including the United States?

A: In principle, yes. But it depends if there will be a change of behavior and policy from the US side. We recognize the United States. If relations are based on mutual respect and equal footing and if the US changes its behavior toward Iran and its policies toward Iran, in the new atmosphere, certainly there could be talks. There could be development of relations.

The problem is that (while) it is true that the tone may have been changed, the policies of the US against Iran have not changed. The same hostility against Iran is going on. The sanctions policy is still in

place and the US does not miss any opportunity to make problems for Iran, to make obstacles in the efforts by Iran for peace and security in the region.

What steps does Iran want to see from the US to help build mutual confidence? It's clear the US is not going to lift sanctions as a first step. Are there things Iran would like to see as a way of indicating Washington is interested in a process that might lead to something more substantive?

The US cannot deny the strategic importance of Iran in the region, and the positive role that Iran can play in peace and security of the region. Therefore, it depends on the will of the US—if the US wants to recognize this importance or to block the role Iran can play. If they are interested to see Iran play an important and a positive role in that region, they will have to change their attitudes and policies toward Iran. The ball is in the court of the Americans.

The Americans say the same thing about Iran. Are we likely to see, over the next four years, a new kind of stalemate where both sides say “I'm not going to act until the other acts first?”

They have put sanctions against us. They are making accusations against us. They are blocking us from any positive role in the region. So if they believe in what they said, they have to show that in their deeds, not only in their words.

The Americans specifically talk about Iran's support for groups that have been associated with acts of violence—Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad. Clinton administration officials say the critical thing they're watching is whether Iran maintains the same level of support for these groups. Is Iran going to continue its support?

First, they have to prove that Iran supports these groups with military assistance or support their violence. We don't deny that we have convergent ideas with Islamic movements in the region. And we don't deny that we send humanitarian support to Hezbollah because they are fighting against aggressors. But there is no proof that we have supported the violence.

On that point, the Palestinians recently charged that Iran was ultimately behind the July 30 and the Sept. 4 suicide bombings in Jerusalem, that the suicide bomb-

ers had trained in Iran. The person who was injured when he blew himself up in Jerusalem a few months ago claimed he was trained in Iran. You asked for proof. Those are people who make very specific allegations.

Traveling to Iran is not a crime if their passports show they have visas. We have to

receive any information officially by the US or others to prove that if anybody on Iranian territory has been involved in training these people. So far, we have not received any official information. ■

LA Times-Washington Post-News Service

Lurie's NewsCartoon



“Now that Ted Turner pledged \$1 billion to the U.N., let's have Bill Gates pick up our NATO tab, and allow Warren Buffett to underwrite the Navy.”

Fabled crimean resort losing its magic

By Carol J. Williams

YALTA, Ukraine—Like a vertical rotisserie, Irina Zhuritsina stands and slowly revolves her browning figure in the Black Sea sun in the firm belief that that is the best method of soaking up the fading rays of late summer.

In the heyday of Soviet holiday-taking, vacationers like this 21-year-old student from the Siberian outpost of Magadan had to stand while sunbathing for lack of space on the pebbly public beaches that were veritable forests of human bodies.

Today, the only reminders of the masses that once thronged this fabled Crimean resort from May through September are arrows painted on the promenade to separate strollers into opposing lanes.

Hit by an economic recession that has made paupers of millions throughout the former Soviet Union and left the new Ukrainian owners without the means to maintain their windfall, Yalta and the chain of resorts overlooking the murky Black Sea no longer suffer the seasonal maladies of sear-bursting crowds and pedestrian gridlock.

Crimea's hotels, guest houses and campgrounds are drawing fewer than half of their Soviet-era visitors as freedom to travel has tempted those with vacation money to exotic new destinations in Turkey, Cyprus and Greece.

“We thought this would be more affordable for us,” says Zhuritsina, who, with her mother, Lidia, spent \$1,700 just to travel the breadth of Russia before venturing south to this seaside resort, which is now part of another country. “But it's been disappointing. Everything is so expensive and there is no concept of service here. I'll think for my next vacation, I'll save a little bit longer and really go abroad.”

Long the summer retreat of Russia's rich and famous, it was in Crimea that Anton Chekhov wrote *The Three Sisters* at nearby Gurzuf and Leo Tolstoy spent his last summers at a wooden-shuttered cottage above the sea. A century later, Crimea is now spurned by the newly wealthy as backward and by the newly poor as way beyond their means.

If Crimea still attracts a fraction of its former patrons, it may be because it retains the aura of the defunct Soviet Union for which many Russians and Ukrainians have become nostalgic. Private property is almost nonexistent here, and

government agencies that act as proprietors have neither the money nor the interest to improve service.

There's no economic freedom here. This is just a notion that is talked about in government and the newspapers,” complains Alexander Kutyshev, deputy director of the state museum at Livadia Palace, venue of the 1945 Yalta Conference that crafted the post-World War II division of Europe. “The last private owner in this region was the czar.”

Lawmakers in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, have yet to create a legal foundation protecting property rights, which has impeded both foreign and local investment.

While the slump in tourism has made Crimea one of the most depressed regions of economically devastated Ukraine, the hard times are seen by some as a natural correction of the warped Communist system that provided a few prerequisites—like all-expense-paid vacations and a free currency—with any real buying power or an economy driven by consumer demand.

Although it was then impossible for individuals to organize vacations, thousands of factories and government offices provided favored employees with 24-day “putevki” that covered everything from air fare and hotel rooms to sightseeing excursions and communal meals. Individual travel was so rare and frowned-upon that those who arrived outside the state package-tour confines were labeled “dikiye”—savages.

But the wild ones now are the only encouraging exceptions to a bleak tourism picture, as they are feeding a fledgling bed-and-breakfast network and providing modest income to those locals with rooms to let.

“I wouldn't get by if not for the overnights,” says Raisa Ivanashenko, a retired beautician whose \$30 monthly pension is often late. She and the legion of pensioners who meet planes, trains and buses to offer accommodation can get from \$1- to \$4-per-person each night, depending on their proximity to the seashore.

For visitors like Yelena Verbitskaya from the northern Ukrainian city of Chernigov, bunking down with a needy babushka is the only affordable option for a seaside vacation. “I never was able to stay in the best places in the old days, either,” the 50-year-old painter says matter-of-factly of her crude accommodation. “At least



now we can go where we want and decide for ourselves how to spend our money.”

Few are spending it at hotels and guest houses that run upward of \$30 a night, as evidenced by record low occupancy rates and abandoned construction. Hundreds of concrete skeletons of half-built hotels dot the seashore, marking the stage

at which their state underwriters realized the folly of expansion. Hundreds of other smaller guest houses have ceased to operate even in high season because there are too few travelers to support a staff.

Even the most prized locations that coddled Communist Party bosses and Kremlin military brass have fallen into disre-

down 19 percent at Crim-Tour facilities compared with the same month last year, which itself was a record low for the biggest tourism enterprise in the region.

Unlike those who concede that the state's unrelenting grip on property is the main deterrent to recovery, Mikhailov blames the slump on bad weather. Warm temperatures began only in mid-July, and thunderstorms plagued the peninsula throughout August.

Russians also now need a visa to visit Ukraine—a time-consuming nuisance not required of them for many Western holiday destinations.

“Eighty percent of our visitors are Russians, but they feel less at home here than in Israel or Cyprus,” Alexei Pakshyev, the Crimean government's chief consultant on service industry development, says of the growing Ukrainian influences in Crimea. “In Israel, you can get three television channels in Russian, while in Crimea you can only get one. Why would anyone choose to come to a place where they feel like an outsider and can't even take a hot shower?” ■

LA Times-Washington Post-News Service

ROCK TRACKS

By Stacy Jenel Smith

Legendary singer/songwriter/producer Brian Wilson has been working on a solo album at his Chicago recording studio. And, of course, fans of the former Beach Boys lead can hear him on *Carnie* and Wendy Wilson's recently-released debut album, “The Wilsons.” The first single off the Mercury Records CD, “Monday Without You,” features vocals by Wilson pere. *Carnie* says she's been after her famous dad to sing with them for three years, then “out of nowhere he said Sure.” Wilson, who's as renowned for his emotional breakdown and drug problems as he is for producing such Beach Boys hits as “Good Vibrations” and “I Get Around,” was estranged from his daughters for a decade. *Carnie* says they've worked through their differences and things have never been better. “He's remarried, has a new baby, works out every day ... he's healthy and vibrant, very coherent—it's remarkable and wonderful to see.” Wilson Sr. contributed to four tracks on “The Wilsons,” produced two of them and is also appearing on “The Wilsons” new music video.

Ric Ocasek's new solo Columbia disc is called “Troubling.” “It's a word I made up. It's kind of about people's troubles, but takes a funny look at them.” The former lead of the Cars has produced many of today's hottest groups in recent years and assembled a hot group of musicians from those groups for his new CD, including Bad Religion guitarist Brian Baker, Hole bassist Melissa Auf Der Maur, Nada Surf drummer Ira Elliot and longtime friend/Cars compatriot, keyboardist Greg Hawkes. Also present on the album (as producer and guitarist on five tracks) is Smashing Pumpkins' frontman Billy Corgan. “I saw him play and went back to meet him,” recalls Ocasek. “We traded numbers and whenever he was in New York he'd come over and hang out. I know and trust his talent and his philosophy, and I thought it was natural to ask him to produce. It was a real thrill to have someone I respect take my work, think about it and then do something with it.”

Country star Trisha Yearwood's new “Songbook (A Collection of Hits)” offers her fans nine songs, seven of which were chart-toppers, as well as three previously unreleased tracks including the number one single, “How Do I Live” (a duet with Garth Brooks), and “Perfect Love.” Years ago, an artist had to amass a lifetime's work before they began putting out greatest hits collections. But Yearwood's career has been remarkable since her 1991 debut album, “Trisha Yearwood,” went to number two and was certified platinum (2 million copies). She remains the only female country artist to attain platinum status or above on her first four albums. In the six years since “She's in Love With the Boy” (her number one single off her debut disc), Trisha has sold 7.5 million records and had nine number one singles. Still, one of the greatest highlights of her career, she says, was performing “The Flame,” (from MCA's Olympics album, “One Voice”) before a worldwide TV audience at the closing ceremonies of the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

We haven't even gotten to Halloween yet, but record companies are already beginning to put out their Christmas fare. A couple of CD's first out for your stocking stuffing are “Hot Rod Holiday” and “Slow Jams Christmas Vol. 2” from The Right Stuff Records. “Hot Rod Holiday” features remastered classic yule tunes from Chuck Berry, The Beach Boys, Fats Domino and others with such tunes as “I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus” by Dion and “Blue Christmas” by Bobby Vee.

PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



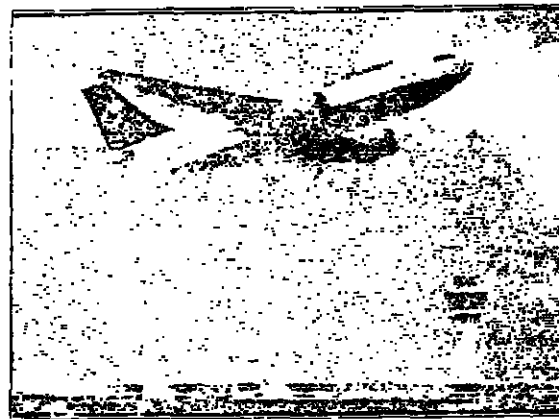


Lufthansa resume flights to Amman

LUFTHANSA FLIGHTS to Amman will resume as of 1 April 1998 with three weekly services, departing from Queen Alia International airport at 7.35hrs in the mornings every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday.

With Lufthansa aspiring to live up to your expectations, it promises to deliver the best. Lufthansa's flights out of Amman are all non-stop, with a very convenient arrival time in Frankfurt to give you the chance to make your connections to any of the 258 destinations that the airline flies to.

Lufthansa's hospitality starts right here in Amman and accompanies you throughout your journey, notwithstanding Lufthansa's exclusive Terminal in Frankfurt airport.



Italian art gets set for the turn of century

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

What will art be like in the year 2000 is the question that many Italian painters are trying to give a positive answer to. This is by demonstrating, in plastic terms, the validity of the theory, now exhausted, which points out that art is dying.

The most valuable answers of the Italian painters of the '90s proving that the urge of creation is insubstantial with human nature, have been brought together, by the Italian Art and Culture Association "Il Polittico", into a collective exhibition that is touring Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Irbid and Cairo.

On display at the Royal Cultural Center till today, Thursday, 2 October, the exhibition does not seek to offer an exhaustive image of the multifaceted contemporary Italian painting scene, said the association's artistic director, Mr Massimo Scaringella.

"Although this is just a part of what has been produced this decade in Italy", he continued, "we have managed to illustrate in this collection the most varied and contrasting aspects of Italian painting of the '90s." Among the 32 participants, there are painters of different generations coming from all over Italy who live in this country or abroad, he points out. "We have not avoided the extremes, on the contrary we set aside such contrasting artistic positions as Elio Marchegiani's archaic approach to painting and Carlo Maria Mariani's Renaissance-like figurative lyricism. Massimo Catalani's colored sand experiments and Giovanni Arcangeli's landscapes painted outdoors on his traditional easel. Alberto Zatti's Byzantine style or Gaetano Di Riso's anthropomorphic reading of the landscapes," he enumerated.

The result of a two-year organization, the selection proposed by "Il Polittico" is centered on the concept of artistic "project". "What interests us is rather the 'direction' of painting rather than its material and iconographic aesthetics," underlines Mr Scaringella. Titled "The Project of Essence", the exhibition illustrates—beyond its variety of aesthetic languages—the common denominators and the major tendencies of Italian painting at the end of the century.



Le stanza dell'indolenza (1995/96) by Paolo Giorgi

Without any doubt, the option for figuration prevails over both abstract and conceptual approaches. There is a 'narrative' element in most of the pictures that, according to the Italian art critic Arnaldo Bonanni Brizzi, become the 'essence' of painting itself. The 'narrated' stories are apparently realistic, given the artists' taste for true-to-life representations of persons, real light perspectives and spaces with neat ornamental details. More often than not the compositions are structured on perfect symmetries and well-balanced grounds. Everything is neat and transparent with Carlo Bertocci, Paolo Giorgi, Franco Pinna or Lillian Ricci, and yet there is always some fantastic or hallucinatory element that surprises, troubles and puzzles the spectator.

As in another common element, the crudition of the painters is translated into numerous mythological, historical and cultural references. "Italian artists reconsider their aesthetic languages through their history and art tradition," stresses art critic Massimo Asfour, the artistic director of Darat al Funun. "They go back to ancient times, rediscover lost mythological and

legendary sources, travel in time back to the Renaissance, and melt all these ingredients into a new artistic language," he explains.

Born out of a state of crisis, as Dr Asfour said, this regenerative process is accompanied by an apparent nostalgic note. The false 'lyricism' characterizing the Italian art of the '90s has in fact a 'pensive function' (in Brizzi's terms). With a specific reference to alchemy, the reasoning of these artists' 'hearts' triggers off the elaboration of their 'project' and its aesthetic expression.

Made possible by the executive program of the cultural agreement between the Jordan and Italy, recently renewed until 1999, the presence of this exhibition in Amman and Irbid, represents a cultural event of specific relevance to the numerous Jordanian artists and art critics that have acquired training in Italian Fine Arts universities, and of major importance to the interaction between the two cultures and art movements in general, says Mr Giovanni Benenati from the cultural department of the Italian Embassy in Amman.



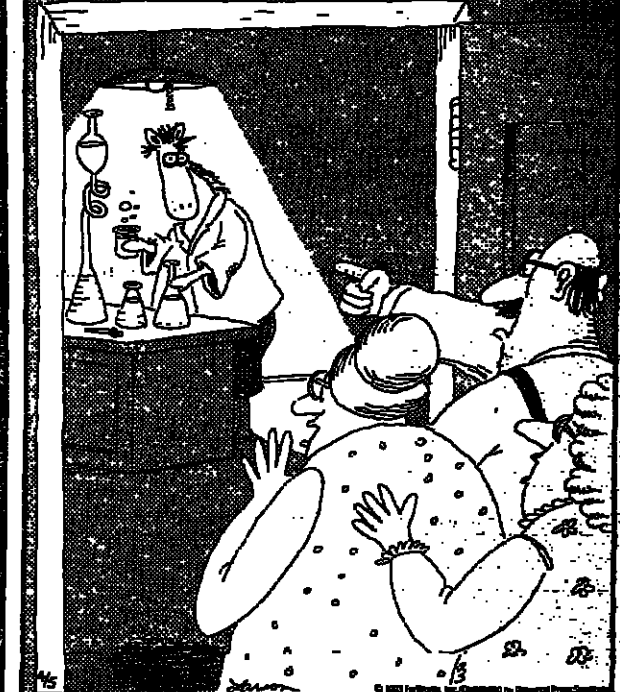
Diario di bordo (1994) by Paola Gandolfi

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Chicken serial killers



Scene from "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Ed"



"Hey! You! ... Yeah, you! I ain't gonna tell you again to quit spittin' on me!"

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ A group exhibition by four Palestinian pioneer artists entitled "Palestine the Reality and the Dream" continues at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts till 2 October.
■ Summer '97 Festival continues at Darat al Funun till 10 October.
■ A group exhibition entitled "Aure Mediterranean" by the Spanish Catalan Masters of the 20th century at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts continues till 28 October.

Film

■ *Poulet Au Vignaire* at the French Cultural Center, Wednesday, 8 October, 8:30 pm.

■ *The Mask at the British Council*, Tuesday, 7 October, 5:00 pm.

■ *Revolving Rhymes at the British Council*, Wednesday, 8 October, 5:00 pm.

Lectures

■ *Interacting with Poetry at the British Council*, Monday, 6 October, 5:00 pm.

Food Fair

■ The International Community School Food Fair is being held on Friday 10 October between 11 am till 4 pm. There will be food from 15 countries, 100 raffle prizes, gymnastic display, children's games, singing and dancing, pony rides.

Abu Shakra introduces the new fragrance GALA de Dia from Loewe



Mr Rami Abu Shakra, general manager of the Abu Shakra Trading Agency announced the launching of the new women's perfume GALA de Dia from Loewe during the press conference held at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel in the presence of the Export Manager of Loewe Mr Luis Gasset.

GALA de Dia is the new female fragrance offered by Perfumes Loewe which has been created as a result of the changes which took place at the beginning of the nineties, both in society as well as in the fashion and perfume realms.

Women seek the most natural expression of their beauty, doing away with any artificial sophistication. Perfumes Loewe has wanted to meet the need for a different way of feeling, directed at the 'New Freshness' and has created GALA de Dia, a fresh, sophisticated, exclusive fragrance, which is both persistent as well as long lasting.

It is intended for a young woman, sure of herself and with her own, very feminine style.

GALA de Dia is a unique and very valuable bottle, whose colors and transparencies transmit the sensations of freshness, exclusiveness, lavishness and sophistication of this new fragrance.

In a word, Loewe has created a fragrance which, through all of its elements, responds to the demands of today's woman.

GALA de Dia is available at all eight Abu Shakra's showrooms.

Neruda's poetry continues to live on

By Hala Shaker
Special to The Star

When Jean-Paul Sartre rejected the offer of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1964, one of the reasons, he gave was that it should have gone to Neruda. That oversight was rectified when this worldwide known poet was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971.

Pablo Neruda's poetry is original, exciting, romantic, earthly and above all deeply human. He developed the concept of universalism where he sought, through his poetry, to bring people closer together. In this respect he also wrote extensively about his homeland, Chile and tried to project it to the outside world. Neruda was a great patriot at the same time. His works have been translated into almost every language.

On the occasion of the National Day of Chile, 18 September, the Embassy of Chile in Amman in cooperation with the Cervantes Institute organized a homage for Pablo Neruda who has written great poetry throughout his life.

Chilean Ambassador Mr Jorge Iglesias Cortes gave a lecture on the life and works of Neruda. He also opened an exhibition at the Gallery of the Spanish Culture Center under the title "Portraying The Absence" for the famous Chilean photographer Louis Poirrot showing passages in the life of Neruda.

This exhibition which ran until 30 September



has been presented to people all around the world. It was shown in Japan, USA, Korea, Indonesia and at the Al Assad Library in Syria.

Alongside the exhibition, a film "Isle Negra" was shown. It depicted Neruda's last home on the Pacific, which was his final resting place until he died in 1973.

Pablo Neruda is the pseudonym of Neftali Ricardo Reyes Basualto. He was born in Parral, Chile on 12 July, 1904. His father Jose del Carmen Reyes Basualto was a railroad worker and

his mother Rosa Basualto, a teacher died within two months after Neruda's birth. In 1910 and after the family moved to the South and settled in Temuco, Neruda attended the boys' school there. "Liceo de Hombres de Temuco." During this time he met the headmistress of the "Liceo de Ninas de Temuco" who encouraged him to study the works of the great classical writers like Tolstoy, Dostoevski and Chekov.

Soon he discovered his love of poetry. In 1923, and only at the age of 20, his first book of verse *Crepusculario* was published and the following year his *Poemas de Amor y Cancion Desesperada*. Twenty love poems and a song of despair appeared and became his most widely read book of verse. "By some miracle which I don't understand, this tormented book has opened the road to happiness for many, many people," Neruda pointed out in later life.

He was later to become one of the most prolific and the best known of Chilean poets and since then he devoted himself, entirely to poetry. His book *Antologia "Rings"* came in 1925.

This was obvious, even during what was to become a glittering diplomatic career. From 1927 to 1933 Neruda was given a series of diplomatic assignments first serving in Ceylon, Burma, Singapore, Rangoon, and later in Buenos Aires where he met the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. From 1934 to 1936, he was appointed the Chilean Consul in Barcelona and then in Madrid.

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and the execution of his friend Lorca contributed much to the maturity of his political and poetic attitudes. Because of his opposition to the Fascist movement, he was discharged from his consular post and left to Paris, where he was appointed in 1939 as consular for Spanish refugees, working to return them to Chile.

In 1940 he returned to Chile but shortly afterwards his government sent him to Mexico where he entered a phase of intense poetic production. There, he wrote *Un Amor Para Bulvar*, in 1941.

In 1945 he was elected senator for the county, Tarapaco Antio Fugasta, during which he won the National Prize for Literature. However, it was then that Neruda began to break away from the political establishment as he became a member of the Communist Party. In 1948, the party was outlawed and Neruda lost his parliamentary rights.

In 1949 he took refuge in France and later in Mexico where he continued writing. Although he travelled a lot during this period, he was allowed in Chile, giving lectures at the university. These later became the basis for his autobiography, *Memorial de Isla Negra* which he completed in 1971 at the ripe age of 67.

Although he was appointed an Ambassador to France in 1971, he was a committed communist till his death in 1973.

His universal poetry, which sought to espouse the human angle, will continue to live on.

Open House at Marriott Bangkok

THE JW Marriott Hotel Bangkok officially opened its doors on 5 September, 1997. A three-day exclusive preview (Open House) is being held at the hotel on 3, 4 and 5 October 1997 from 9 am to 5 pm for public viewing. Those attending the Open House will be able to view all areas of the fully completed JW Marriott Hotel Bangkok. Hotel personnel who have had extensive training will be on hand to inform visiting guests about the hotel's operations and



facilities. While visiting the different restaurants, various food samples will be offered.

Robert Hutchison, general manager, explains, "The hotel and its staff are part of the local community. We want the local community to feel comfortable in coming to our hotel. Without their support, we cannot be successful. The Open House concept is our way of saying to the Bangkok market that our hotel is not just for foreigners, but it is for everyone to come and enjoy the services and facilities we have to offer."

As a special incentive, each guest attending the Open House will be given a JW Marriott Passport to travel (tour the hotel). As guests visit each area of the hotel, they will get a stamp in the passport. Once the tour has been completed, guests can submit their passports at the main lobby, and be eligible for the lucky prize drawings. Some of the prizes being offered is complimentary roundtrip airline tickets for two to San Francisco, Hong Kong, Singapore and Sydney, including five nights' accommodation at Marriott hotels in these destinations.

SEPTEMBER 1997

A special section offering
fresh perspectives on
global issues prepared for

The Star

THE WORLD PAPER

PRINTED IN SIX LANGUAGES
ON FIVE CONTINENTS



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It's not the size of your savings rate, it's how you use it

For emerging economies, thrift doesn't always pay

Domestic savings has long been a key for investor confidence in an emerging economy. Those countries which show the discipline to salt some earnings away get high marks from economists and high rates of outside investment. But the relationship between savings and prosperity is cloudy today, as evidenced by this "piggy bank" chart, derived from the latest World Times Wealth of Nations index, and the accompanying articles on the changing psychologies of savings

By Hugh Peyman

SAVINGS, LIKE MONEY, may not be everything, but they certainly can be very useful. Flick through the International Monetary Fund statistical tables on savings as a percentage of gross domestic product, and an all too obvious correlation appears.

Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan and Bolivia all have savings rates well under 10 percent, while China, Korea and Malaysia all top 35 percent and approach 40 percent. Cause and effect are

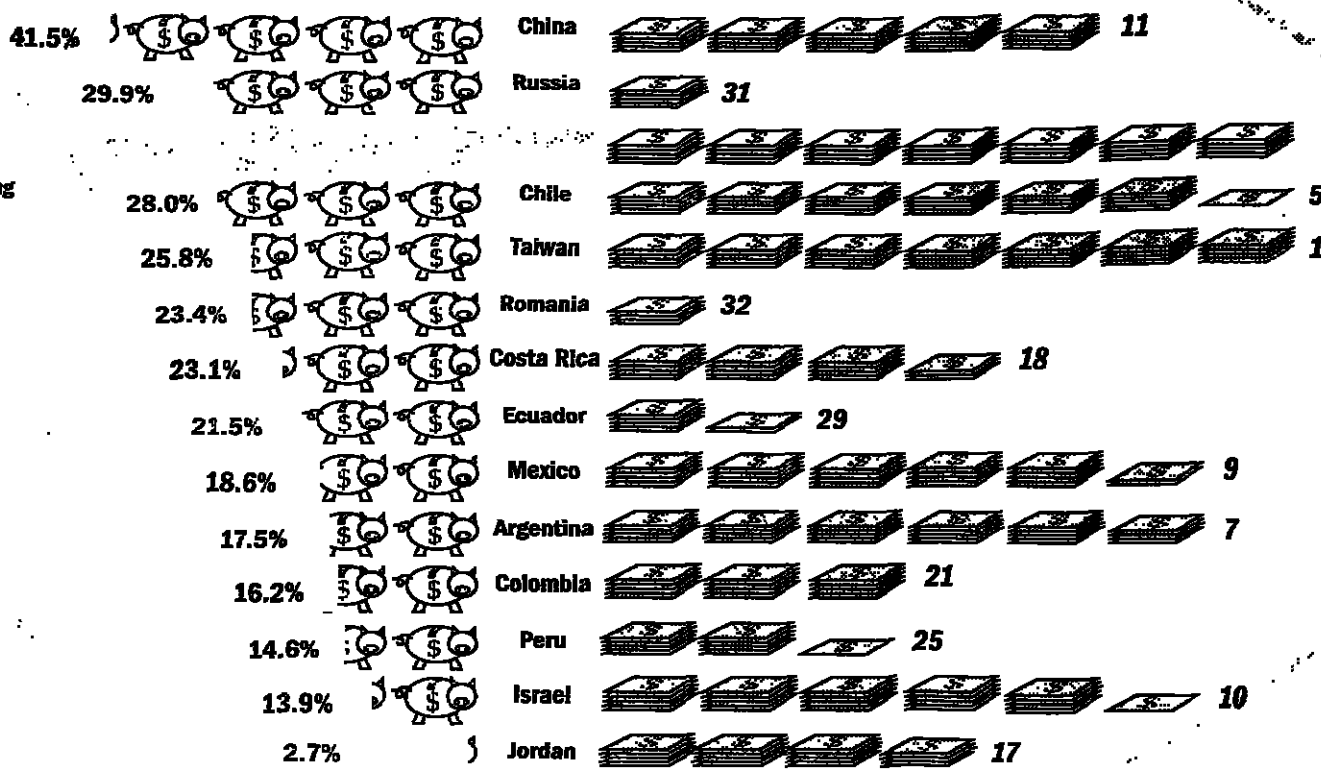
clear. High savings are the forerunner of high growth. The super savers of East Asia wrought the East Asian economic miracle. Current consumption was deferred for future gain.

That was the theory of the 1970s and 1980s, and it seemed to work flawlessly. Paddy fields were turned into industrial estates and rice farmers earned industrial wages while back in the US, where the consumer was king, the savings rate fell to 15 percent, well below that of India, and its industrial belt rusted: cause and effect, QED.

Life, however, is never simple. With savings rates little changed, the US has now resurfaced as the world's economic powerhouse. Re-engineered corporations from coast-to-coast and a government budget that almost balances have created a new look America. In Silicon Valley alone it has the world's greatest emerging market.

Yet savings have not been the key. All in all, they have averaged about 17 percent since 1980. Meanwhile across the globe in Asia, Thailand's economy is in meltdown, yet its savings rate has averaged nearly 35 percent in the

THIS LITTLE PIGGY WENT TO MARKET



This chart shows the gross domestic savings rate of 13 emerging economies as a percentage of their Gross Domestic Product, on the left, and a measure of that country's full economic ranking in the Wealth of Nations Index on the right. A composite developed country's (CompDev) savings rate and economic ranking appears third from the top. Each full money stack represents five rankings on the triangle index, with the strongest economy getting seven stacks, the weakest a fifth of a stack.

SOURCE: WORLD TIMES WEALTH OF NATIONS INDEX

ILLUSTRATION BY TONY HUGHES

1990s. Cause and effect do not seem to be quite so clearly linked. The fact is savings are only one part of the economic growth equation, albeit an important part. Unfortunately, the belief in the virtue of high savings—and hence high investment rates—has blinded economists to the importance of other factors.

An obsession with savings is like an obsession with making bricks. They are essential to building a house, but so are many other tangible inputs from glass to wooden beams, not to mention intangibles like skilled labor and efficient infrastructure. There is a growing awareness that savings for savings sake is as meaningless and mindless as making ever more bricks without focusing on the other key inputs. Ultimately it is a futile exercise and the house comes crashing down.

As it stands, there should have been warning bells when it became apparent that Southeast Asian tiger cubs like Thailand and Malaysia were using more investment—and hence more savings—to produce the same amount of industrial output as Japan, Korea and Taiwan. In other words, the Southeast Asian cubs have been less efficient.

Following the Northeast Asian model for sustained economic growth without using the same ingredients has had the result that any cook could pre-

dict. The World Times Wealth of Nations Index dramatically illustrates the differences in intangibles, such as the social environment and information exchange, that exist between the Tiger economies and countries like Japan. From the education of scientists to the

quality of primary school education and from computer ownership to press freedom the differences are critical, collectively far more important than savings alone because they determine how efficiently and creatively the savings are used.

The obsession with one variable is of course redolent of the once mighty Soviet Union. Four decades of high savings overcame war, starvation and isolation to grab the lead in the Space Race. A few decades after Khrushchev vowed to bury America, many of those savings turned out to be like water flowing into sand.

Cheap capital, showered on businesses by both domestic and foreign savers, is about as life threatening to an economy as cheap alcohol or cheap heroin is to the individual.

Whether it is Thai poverty developers or Chinese shirt makers, the result has been the same: high savings, giving rise to easy credit, has led to reckless investment, vast over capacity and huge inventories that ultimately will have to be cleared at fire sale

prices. China has in stock the equivalent of over five year's worth of demand for men's shirts. Bangkok, not to mention Shanghai, has more cranes—and hence will soon have more empty office space and upmarket residential property—than anywhere else on earth.

Back in Benin and Bhutan they would not mind having the problems of Bangkok or Shanghai, for they are the problems of success. However, they are also a sharp illustration that high savings on their own do not provide a permanent road to paradise, they are merely one important ingredient. ©

HUGH PEYMAN IS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF KLEINWORT BENSON RESEARCH ASIA.

WEALTH OF NATIONS TRIANGLE INDEX OF 35 EMERGING ECONOMIES

RANK SEPTEMBER 1997	COUNTRY	CHANGE SINCE MARCH 1997	ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT SCORE (RANK)	INFORMATION EXCHANGE SCORE (RANK)	SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT SCORE (RANK)	TOTAL SCORE
1	Taiwan	0	637 (1)	595 (3)	435 (11)	1667
2	Czech Republic	▲ 2	498 (6)	559 (4)	584 (1)	1641
3	Israel	▲ 1	442 (10)	660 (1)	497 (5)	1599
4	South Korea	▼ 2	591 (4)	604 (2)	391 (20)	1546
5	Chile	▼ 2	537 (5)	510 (6)	448 (10)	1495
6	Malaysia	0	603 (2)	462 (10)	418 (15)	1483
7	Hungary	▲ 1	383 (18)	542 (5)	534 (3)	1459
8	Argentina	▼ 1	480 (7)	495 (8)	429 (12)	1404
9	Poland	0	400 (15)	477 (9)	511 (4)	1388
10	Costa Rica	▲ 2	383 (18)	431 (11)	537 (2)	1351
11	Uruguay	▲ 2	343 (26)	508 (7)	476 (6)	1327
12	Mexico	▼ 2	445 (9)	414 (12)	423 (14)	1282
13	Thailand	▼ 2	563 (3)	324 (21)	379 (22)	1266
14	Panama	▲ 6	383 (18)	344 (19)	455 (9)	1182
15	Venezuela	0	366 (22)	398 (14)	408 (19)	1170
16	Brazil	▼ 2	409 (13)	384 (16)	349 (26)	1142
17	South Africa	▲ 6	362 (24)	396 (14)	357 (25)	1115
18	Jordan	▲ 7	384 (17)	285 (25)	428 (13)	1097
19	Turkey	▲ 5	401 (14)	356 (18)	329 (27)	1086
20	Colombia	▼ 2	369 (21)	333 (20)	368 (24)	1068
21	Romania	▼ 4	260 (32)	320 (23)	471 (7)	1051
22	Russia	▼ 6	275 (31)	398 (13)	370 (23)	1043
23	Ecuador	▲ 4	289 (29)	324 (21)	415 (16)	1038
24	China	▼ 5	436 (11)	265 (27)	322 (28)	1023
25	Philippines	▲ 3	430 (12)	266 (26)	313 (30)	1009
26	Tunisia	0	365 (23)	230 (28)	409 (18)	1004
27	Indonesia	▼ 5	468 (8)	210 (31)	309 (32)	987
28	Peru	▲ 1	354 (25)	304 (24)	313 (30)	971
29	Ukraine	0	330 (28)	220 (29)	381 (21)	931
30	Egypt	▲ 1	391 (16)	194 (32)	314 (29)	899
31	India	▲ 2	177 (35)	191 (38)	469 (8)	837
32	Cuba	▼ 2	342 (27)	215 (30)	247 (35)	804
33	Morocco	▼ 1	294 (30)	178 (34)	308 (33)	780
34	Pakistan	0	246 (33)	158 (35)	265 (34)	669
35	Vietnam	0				

As a measure of comparison for the 35 developing countries ranked in the chart above, the 63 variables (next page) comprising the Wealth of Nations Index were tabulated for four developed countries: the US, Japan, The Netherlands and Singapore to create a composite "developed country" score, as indicated.

Developed Country Composite	607	667	561	1835
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Updated twice a year, the index is a product of The World Times Money Means Institute, underwritten by: Amrop International, Arthur Andersen, Banque Paribas de Paris, Fidelity Investments, Gracien Bank (Hemba), Kuwait Investment Projects Company, K.S.C., MBA & Associates, State Street Corporation, the United Nations Development Programme and The World Bank Group.

By Zoltan Miklos

IT WAS PAYDAY. Maria, a young medical doctor in Buenos Aires, collected her salary before leaving the hospital. It totalled an amazing amount. With millions of pesos in her purse, she rushed to a nearby supermarket to buy some food for her family.

Maria had good reason to hurry: she knew that each hour could steal a percentage of the value of the money in her wallet. It was common knowledge that the price printer tools in the shops didn't stop for a minute. Even so, she was shocked by the price tags she found. "Don't tell me that everything can double overnight," she cried in despair.

Something snapped. Maria's inhibitions, burnt into her genes by a tradition of savings several generations long, were suddenly swept away. Going from shop

to shop, she spent every single peso of her salary that very afternoon. "At least I could get something for my money," she observes, nearly 10 years later.

After trying to cope with several waves of hyperinflation, by the end of the 1980s many Argentines thought like Maria. Goods had more value than money. The best survival strategy was to buy something—food, clothing, anything—and do so as fast as possible.

Inflation ran riot to such a degree that it forced president Raul Alfonsin, the first civilian leader after many years of hard military rule, to step down before the end of his term in 1989. His successor, Carlos Menem pledged to stabilize the currency, but it took him three years to achieve this goal.

Finally, a solution emerged in 1992, crafted by Menem's newly appointed

economy minister, Domingo Cavallo. Within the framework of a conservative economic plan, which gave priority to privatization and liberalization, the peso's value was fixed at par with the US dollar by law.

The peso has been stable ever since, so much so, in fact, that inflation went under zero last year. Cavallo's policies, at least in the first years, resulted in outstanding GDP growth rates of 6-7 percent. After a recession caused by the Mexican crisis, GDP is again expected to increase by around 5 percent in 1997. But behavioral patterns, conditioned by years of fear of devaluation, don't change so easily.

When people began to feel more—and more durable—money in their pockets, they didn't open savings accounts. Instead, they started to consume. Financial

► UNEMPLOYMENT PAGE 2

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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 4 - 10 Oct.

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

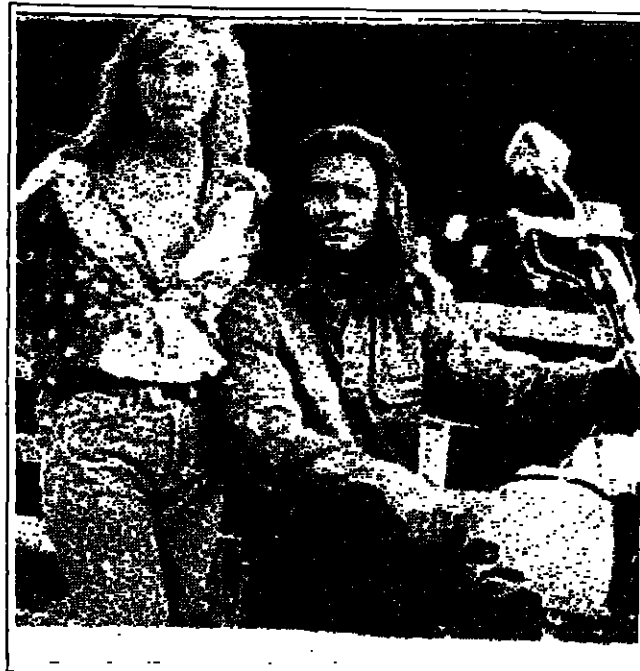
2:00—Holy Koran
2:30—Muppet Show
3:00—Blue Heelers
3:30—World of Geo
4:00—The Valley Between
4:30—Tilt
5:00—French Programs
5:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Ties that Bind
8:30—Prism
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film

SUNDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:30—The Magic School Bus
3:00—Energy Express
3:40—Lucky Luky
4:00—American Chart Show
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
8:30—National Geographic
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—One West Walkiki
11:15—Sisters

MONDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Show With The Mouse
2:30—Cowboy Of The Mos Mesa
3:00—Gillette Sports Special
3:30—Deep Water Have
4:00—Animal Show
4:30—Ocean Girl
5:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Murphy Brown



Renegade, Sunday 9:10 pm

8:30—Babylon 5
9:10—Highlander
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Emergency Room (e.r.)
11:15—Homicide

TUESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Sandocan
2:30—C.R.O.
3:00—Square One T.V.
3:30—Skippy
4:30—The Album Show
5:15—French Programs
7:30—News in French
7:35—News Headlines
7:35—Coach
8:00—Tilt
8:30—Encounter
9:10—Nature of Things
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Great Defender

11:15—I Remember Nelson

WEDNESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Jonny Quest
2:30—Super Dase
3:00—Secrets of Treasure Island
3:30—Spell Binder
4:00—Monsters Today
4:30—Border Town
6:00—French Programs
7:30—News in French
7:35—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—Soldier's Diary
8:30—Oprah Winfrey Show
9:10—Spencer for Hire
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Land's End
11:00—American Gothic



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): The Fifth Element
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): Flipper
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): Caption Ron
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): Mars Attacks
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): Monkey Trouble
- Galleria I (Tel: 634149): Face Off
- Galleria II (Tel: 634149): My Best Friend's Wedding

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Ovide and The Gang
2:30—The New Fred and Barney
3:00—America's Funniest People
3:30—He Shoot He Scores
4:30—Shingalana
5:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Trivial Pursuit
8:00—Parenthood
8:30—Lois and Clark (Superman)
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Step By Step

L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE
5:00—Secrets de famille
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Magazine
Faut pas rêver
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine pour tous
Ziva

LUNDI

5:00—Secrets de famille
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Thalassa
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine scientifique
Cinq sur cinq

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:05—Flintstones
2:30—Leo The Lion
3:00—French Programs
4:00—Family Matters
4:30—NBA
6:10—French Film
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Neighbors
8:00—The Health Show
8:30—Adventures of Brisco County
9:10—Drama Series
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Best Seller
11:15—Daddy's Girls

MARDI

5:00—Secrets de famille
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Savoir plus santé
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Orient sur Seine

MERCREDI

5:00—Secrets de famille
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Ushuaia
7:00—Le journal
7:15—E = M6

JEUDI

5:00—La France aux mille visages
5:30—Fort Boyard
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Le dessous des cartes

VENREDI

5:30—Film: Le garçon sur la colline
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Allo, la terre

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI
5:00—Secrets de famille
5:30—Des chiffres et des lettres
6:00—Cyber-vision
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine

Programs are subject to change by JTV

MUSIC

Luis Miguel in no hurry to become crossover artist

By Robert Hilburn

LOS ANGELES—He's young, handsome and popular almost beyond belief. He has sold an estimated 45 million albums worldwide and regularly fills 50,000-seat stadiums. He's a stylish performer who counts Frank Sinatra among his idols.

So, when's Latin pop superstar Luis Miguel finally going to say "s" to recording in English?

It's a question that was raised in some quarters of the pop world in 1994 when the Mexican singer's "Segundo Romance" became the first Spanish-language album to be certified as a million-seller in the United States.

It was reintroduced in 1995, when the charismatic 27-year-old performer sang "Come Fly With Me" in English at the 80th-birthday salute to Sinatra at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

Remarkably, he stole the show from the likes of Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and even Tony Bennett by reflecting much of the snap and style of Sinatra's own ring-a-ding image.

And the question is likely to be raised again as the word of mouth from Luis Miguel's triumphant new US tour begins filtering through the pop world.

His dazzling concert last week at the Universal Amphitheatre here helped explain why he enjoys such phenomenal success.

The show was a marvelously designed and wonderfully executed blend of Latin music tradition—including segments devoted to boleros and mariachi—and contemporary sensibilities.

Though you didn't need to know the language to get caught up in the energy and passion of the performance, the show would surely be more accessible to most US pop fans if Luis Miguel sang in English.

You got a hint of the potential impact when he sang "Besame Mucho," a song that has been recorded scores of times in English since it was written in 1944 by Consuelo Velazquez. Even though Luis Miguel sang it in Spanish, the familiarity of the song made it seem far more immediate than the other material.

While he could build an English base through word of mouth, a few key recordings would more quickly do the trick.

Luis Miguel's agent, Peter Grosslight of William Morris, thinks the singer could "quadruple" his popularity by expanding his music to an English-speaking audience in this country and in Europe.

That could add up to whopping figures

since Luis Miguel's success on the Latin pop scene alone makes him one of the most popular singers in the world. His latest album, "Romances," entered the US pop chart last month at No. 14.

So what are the chances that he will attempt a crossover?

Luis Miguel—whose last name is Gallego, but who uses his two first names professionally—no doubt likes all the mystery surrounding his decision. In an interview on the eve of the Los Angeles show, the singer, who speaks English fluently, said he thinks it's important for celebrities to maintain a certain degree of mystique.

But he's also clearly nervous about the English-language issue.

For one thing, he feels uncomfortable being seen as part of what he calls the "crossover-artist stereotype," someone who thinks, for reasons of ego or record sales, that he needs success in the English-language world to validate his artistry or stardom.

Mostly, however, one senses his reservations have to do with his perfectionism.

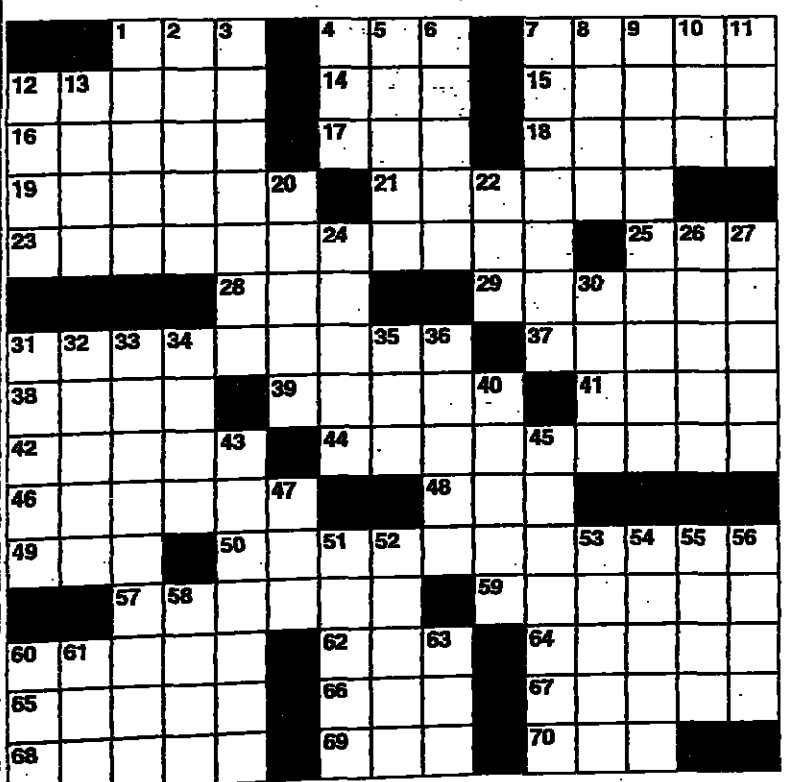
"When I go on stage, I want to transmit certain emotions and the best way to do it is with my own language, which is Spanish," says the singer, who has homes in Los Angeles, where he records his albums, and in Acapulco, Mexico, where he tends to stay when he's not working.

"In English, I can communicate, but not as well...I need to find the right record producer, the right songs...and that takes time. I am very busy now in my Spanish world. I'm young. I'm patient. I probably will make the album some day, but I don't want to do it until I know I will do it right."

"It's not important to me to make an English album just because of marketing...just to be No. 1 in Billboard (in the United States). We already reached No. 14 with my new Spanish album."

LA Times-washington Post News Service

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4 Across: Blank or Brooks | 44 Water additives | 5 Declares | Mars: comb. form |
| 1 Damage | 46 Refrain from taking part | 6 Drive back | 35 From — Z |
| 7 Pacific island group | 48 Large quantity | 7 — up (blundered) | 36 Recent trade pact letters |
| 12 Drudge | 49 6 on the dial | 8 "I cannot tell —" | 40 Woman's scarf |
| 14 SL | 50 Certain blanket | 9 Don Johnson TV series | 43 Mark the boundary of |
| 15 Trims | 57 Talk idly | 10 Choose | 45 Enzyme in muscle tissue |
| 16 Actress Black | 59 Very happy | 11 Cool — cucumber | 47 For shame! |
| 17 Vigor | 60 Mentally alert | 12 Hits the slopes | 51 Wild |
| 18 Lasso | 62 Sheep | 13 Shoe fastener | 52 Picture holder |
| 19 Cake toppings | 64 Hurt | 20 List of candidates | 53 Indy entrant |
| 21 Buy back | 65 Assembly of witches | 22 Morning grass cover | 55 Auxiliary verb |
| 23 Triple Crown winner | 66 Pierre's friend | 24 Blue-pencils | 56 Taro root |
| 25 Kin of Ltd. | 67 "— evil" | 26 "— on Sunday" | 58 Toward shelter |
| 28 Possessed | 68 Trifled | 27 Sealed plant | 60 Dead |
| 29 Fabric former | 69 Pull one's — (fool) | 30 Islands off Irish coast | 61 Sticky substance |
| 31 Bach's middle name | 70 Goo! | 31 Spout of energy | 63 Russian plane |
| 37 Energy | DOWN | 32 Dye for textiles | |
| 38 Destitute | 1 Santa — | 33 Climbing vine | |
| 39 Kett and James | 2 Occurrence | 34 The planet | |
| 41 Experts | 3 Extant | | |
| 42 Donkeys | 4 Atlas item | | |

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: Get organized while the moon's in Virgo. Long walks, philosophical conversations and comedy clubs are favored.

Aries (March 21-April 19): Do your work carefully. Errors will count double. A friendly competition jolts you out of your lethargy. Don't get cocky—the other guy's getting smarter.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): You have a hidden advantage. A friend would love to help you achieve your dreams. Your workload's intense. Those are good compromise, although it may mean making a concession.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): Stick close to home. A friend has an important matter to discuss. True love takes precedence. Reading and writing projects also go well. There's more action and less talk. Keep a secret you hear.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Complete your most difficult task. Make time for friends and family. Get your work done early—a friend has a problem to discuss. Offer somebody special a home-cooked meal.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Whip your finances into shape. Start that big writing project and get it done. Stay home and relax with loved ones. Devote time to romance, in the privacy of your own home. Find something interesting and exciting to do in your neighborhood, together.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You're shrewd with money. Put it in a place where it will grow, but don't take a risk. Gather more unto yourself.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): Hold a private conversation to achieve a shared objective. You're charming, wise and gorgeous. Get it on film!

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): Let your friends help you get organized to improve your chances of success. Several private conversations are required. You'll gather lots of interesting data.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Comply with an older person's picky demands. It'll help your career. You'll hardly have time for work. So many people want to be with you, how can you refuse?

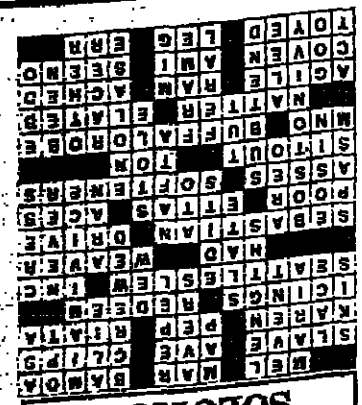
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your supervisors can't seem to make up their minds about anything. Do that for them, nicely, and make points.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Talk to the people with the money about loans and grants. Make contact with an attractive foreigner. Start figuring out how to finance a trip.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Heed a practical partner's advice. If you're strapped for funds, start investigating possibilities. There's plenty of money out there.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Team up with a neat freak to achieve your dreams. Get an expert to teach you how, and pay off debts this year. Cinch the perfect relationship and create great works of art.

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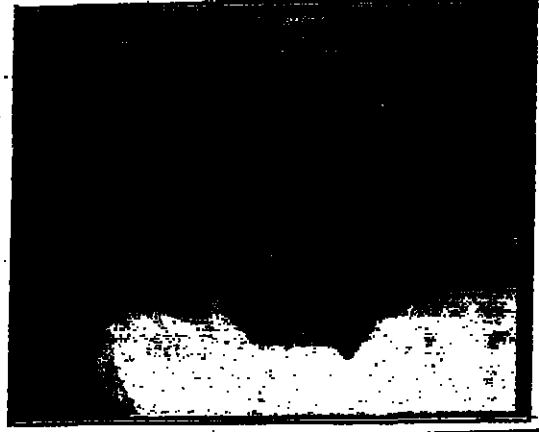
What do you give the man who has (almost) everything?



Le Jourdain

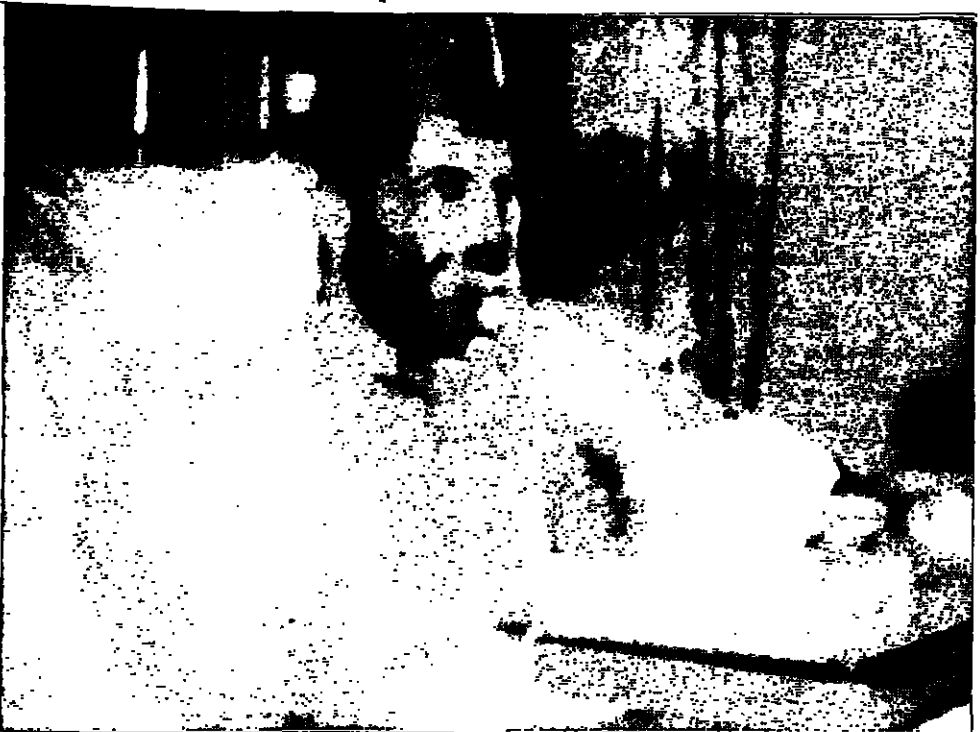
Supplément en français du Star

Le guide spirituel du Hamas libéré par Israël, soigné à Amman
 Israël a libéré hier le vieux guide spirituel du mouvement intégriste palestinien Hamas, détenu depuis plus de huit ans, et l'a immédiatement banni en Jordanie. Les Palestiniens ont été unanimes à condamner la déportation de cheikh Ahmed Yassine, 61 ans, grabataire et très malade et qui se retrouve contre son gré éloigné de sa terre natale. Israël a expliqué l'opération en raison de la détérioration de son état de santé, mais aussi pour répondre à une demande du Roi Hussein et afin «d'aider le processus de paix». Des chefs du Hamas à Amman se sont rendus à son chevet, au Centre médical du Roi Hussein, où il est soigné (notre photo). D'autre part, le Hamas a affirmé qu'Ahmed Yassine rentrerait à Gaza après son hospitalisation en Jordanie. Le fondateur du Mouvement de la Résistance islamique (Hamas) dans la bande de Gaza avait été arrêté en mai 1989 par Israël et condamné en 1991 à la réclusion à perpétuité pour avoir commandité des attentats anti-Israéliens. Ces dernières années, il avait lancé plusieurs appels à la modération depuis l'hôpital présidentiel où il était détenu, prenant ses distances avec les attentats-suicides revendiqués par la branche armée de son mouvement. «Cheikh Yassine est paralysé et confiné dans une chaise roulante. Il souffre de détérioration musculaire, de problèmes chroniques de respiration, de plusieurs infections internes, de pertes de l'ouïe et il a besoin d'une surveillance médicale quotidienne», a précisé le porte-parole de l'armée israélienne. Des responsables palestiniens, s'exprimant sous le couvert de l'anonymat, ont accusé Israël de l'avoir libéré en échange de deux agents présumés du service secret israélien (Mossad) détenus en Jordanie, à savoir les deux agresseurs du leader politique du Hamas Khaled Mecha'al.



La Jordanie, terrain de jeu terroriste ?

Après la fusillade contre deux employés de l'ambassade d'Israël, et surtout la tentative d'assassinat, perpétrée la semaine dernière contre un dirigeant du Hamas, cette question n'est plus dénuée de sens.



Au Centre médical du Roi Hussein, le leader du Hamas Khaled Mecha'al a retrouvé la voie de la guérison. Mais la nature du produit qui lui a été injecté, reste encore inconnue.

L'état de santé de Khaled Mecha'al, chef du bureau politique du mouvement islamiste palestinien Hamas, s'améliore de jour en jour. Mais il l'a échappé belle. Dans le premier communiqué officiel, le ministre de l'Information minimisait l'affaire en parlant d'une simple bagarre entre le garde du corps de Khaled Mecha'al et deux touristes. Le ministre reconnaissait ensuite qu'il y avait bel et bien eu une tentative d'assassinat. Depuis, les forces de sécurité interrogent les deux touristes arrêtés sur place. Pour le moment, la discrétion est totale au sujet de ces mystérieux assaillants et nous laisse avec cette interrogation : Pourquoi diable des Canadiens s'attaquent-ils au chef du Hamas ? Ces touristes, qui se répandaient dans l'opinion publique, donnent plus de poids à l'accusation lancée par les dirigeants du Hamas, les partis et

les syndicats jordaniens. En effet, pour eux, «les services israéliens de renseignements - le Mossad - ont derrière cet attentat», inégalement en Jordanie. L'opposition exige déjà «le gel» du traité de paix jordanien, «si la participation israélienne à cet attentat se confirme, cela signifierait qu'Israël supprime unilatéralement les clauses relatives à la sécurité incluses dans le traité».

Au passage, le Roi Hussein a saisi cette occasion pour envoyer un signe amical aux islamistes, surtout aux Frères musulmans jordaniens qui maintiennent toujours leur décision de boycotter les prochaines élections législatives. Le Roi a ainsi demandé à un médecin spécialiste des Etats-Unis de venir sans délai à Amman pour examiner Khaled Mecha'al. En plus de son caractère humain, ce geste n'a pu être qu'apprécié par les isla-

mistes et encourager les plus modérés d'entre eux. Signalons toutefois que le gouvernement jordanien n'a pas dénoncé officiellement et explicitement l'attentat contre le dirigeant du Hamas.

De leur côté, les Jordaniens en général sont inquiets et exigent que la lumière soit faite dans cette affaire. D'autre part, l'attentat renforce leur répulsion à l'égard de la paix. Ils ont l'impression qu'Israël ne se contente plus de pratiquer son terrorisme contre les Palestiniens en Palestine mais partout. L'enjeu est de taille. C'est pourquoi le Roi s'est montré catégorique lors de sa rencontre avec les journalistes jordaniens, dimanche dernier : «La Jordanie condamne le terrorisme sous toutes ses formes et elle ne sera jamais une de ses bases».

Suleiman Sweiss

Sale temps pour les journalistes

Le gouvernement a décidé de suspendre 13 hebdomadaires et ce sont 200 personnes qui se retrouvent soudain au chômage. Récits de vies privées de liberté et de ressources.

Trente-quatre ans plutôt amère. Le rédacteur en chef et propriétaire de l'hebdomadaire, Khaled al-Rinawi, cache son désarroi derrière son gros rire et une bonne dose de truculence : «Netanyahu n'a pas pris en compte les progrès réalisés par son prédécesseur sur le chemin de la paix. Notre gouvernement se comporte un peu de la même manière avec la démocratie».

«Aujourd'hui les journalistes sont venus pour toucher leur dernier salaire. Mais dans une semaine, à Al-Majd, il n'y aura plus personne, même pas le garçon qui sert le thé». Le journal était parvenu à verser près de deux-tiers des 300.000 dinars exigés par le gouvernement. «Nous allons compléter mais ils nous ont fermés avant».

Journalistes ou non, tous se retrouvent donc à la recherche

d'un nouveau travail. Mais où aller ? Treize journaux qui ferment d'un coup, et ce sont 200 personnes, c'est-à-dire 200 familles sur le corridor, marbre encore Khaled al-Rinawi. Dans ces conditions, impossible pour les journaux survivants d'absorber ce trop-plein de main d'œuvre. D'une phrase lapidaire, Sabar résume le sentiment général : «Nous sommes tristes et sans espoir».

Les journalistes d'Al Hadath (L'Événement) semblent aussi désespérés que leurs collègues d'Al-Majd. Le rédacteur en chef, Nidal Mansour, ne comprend toujours pas pourquoi son journal a été suspendu, estimant avoir répondu aux critères d'enregistrement du capital : «La décision du gouvernement est à la fois politique, pour nous empêcher de participer aux prochaines élections, et financière».

puisque nous ne pourrions pas récolter les recettes publicitaires toujours importantes en période électorale».

Depuis plus de deux ans, Khaled Abu el-Khair et sa femme Maisoun travaillent pour Al Hadath. Lui est journaliste, elle, donne un coup de main pour trouver de la pub. Ils ont un fils d'à peine un an et Maisoun, à 25 ans, attend son deuxième enfant en janvier prochain. «Nous faisons le tour des ambassades occidentales pour savoir s'il est possible d'obtenir un statut de réfugié», raconte la future maman. Parle-t-elle par dépit ? Son mari poursuit en étouffant sa rage : «Comment voulez-vous que l'on fasse vivre notre enfant sans argent ? Nous ne pourrions même plus l'emmener chez le docteur».

Khaled gagnait 235 dinars par mois, ce qui est à peu près le salaire moyen d'un journaliste en Jordanie. Du jour au lendemain, toute la famille se retrouve sans revenus et les dettes de la maison encore à couvrir.

Franchise rigolade, en revanche dans l'équipe d'Al-Bilad. Les journalistes sont réunis dans le hall d'entrée du journal autour de blagues et chamaillements de collègues. Ils ne peuvent plus entrer dans leur salle de rédaction formée à ci, à la suite de la décision gouvernementale, Tajj Addin, un riche homme d'affaires dont la famille possède le quotidien Al Arab el Yamm, a racheté l'hebdomadaire et fermé les locaux, sans dire ce qu'il comptait faire du personnel. En tout cas, il ne semble pas prêt à les payer.

Depuis trois mois et plus, les journalistes d'Al Bilad n'ont pas perçu leurs salaires. L'ancien propriétaire du journal l'a laissé dans une situation financière désastreuse et a pris la poudre d'escampette pour l'Angleterre, «où il dépense notre argent», ironise l'un des rédacteurs. Les journalistes d'Al Bilad en veulent donc autant au gouvernement qu'à leur ex-patron. Ils préfèrent pourtant en rire qu'en pleurer, même si l'un d'eux avoue aujourd'hui devoir plus de 2000 dinars à ses voisins et à sa famille.

Yannick Lainé



Les journalistes manifestent il y a 4 mois contre le nouveau code de presse. Ils semblent aujourd'hui résignés.

Rapport Truche : danger pour la presse ?

Pierre Truche est le premier président de la Cour de Cassation, le niveau de juridiction le plus élevé en France. Il a remis cet été au gouvernement et au Président de la République un rapport sur la justice. Ce compte-rendu est le fruit de cinq mois et demi de réflexion par une commission composée de 21 membres, présidée justement par Pierre Truche.

Outre l'indépendance des magistrats vis-à-vis du pouvoir, la commission a également étudié les relations pas toujours faciles entre la justice et la presse.

Le respect de la présomption d'innocence était l'un des points les plus délicats abordés par la commission.

Elle a finalement proposé que des «mesures restrictives» soient appliquées contre «la publication des noms des personnes mises en cause par une enquête et une garde à vue».

Pour certains journalistes, cette restriction, si elle était décidée, pourrait entraver la liberté de l'information. «Comment évoquer alors une affaire mettant en cause un maire d'une grande

ville, voire de la capitale ?», s'interroge le rédacteur en chef du Parisien. Le sulfureux fondateur de Marianne, et précédemment de L'Événement du jeudi, est encore plus vindicatif : «Si un journal ne peut plus faire d'investigations, autant dire que la presse n'a qu'à publier une feuille d'avis au service de la magistrature».

D'autres qui trouvent le rapport Truche à leur goût. Bernard Guetta, par exemple, directeur de la rédaction du Nouvel Observateur et ancien journaliste du Monde, «ne trouve pas mauvais que l'on réaffirme le principe de la présomption d'innocence. Au contraire, il faut rappeler aux journalistes, aux hommes politiques, aux magistrats et aux avocats que ce n'est pas parce que l'on enquête sur monsieur Dupont qu'il faut jeter son nom sur la place publique».

Reste à savoir maintenant ce que le ministre de la justice, Elisabeth Guigou, fera de ce rapport et si elle osera aller au-delà.

Le Jourdain

Religion

Du matin au soir, il chante Dieu aux hommes

Sa voix vous agace ou vous transporte mais malgré l'habitude elle ne peut laisser indifférent. Le muezzin, celui qui appelle à la prière, accompagne la vie quotidienne de tous les Jordaniens qu'ils le veuillent ou non. Amer nous parle de sa vocation. Il est muezzin cinq fois par jour à Irbid.

L'appel à la prière

Dieu est grand
 Dieu est grand
 Dieu est grand
 Dieu est grand
 Je déclare que
 Dieu est unique
 Je déclare que
 Mohamed est
 son prophète
 Venez à la prière
 Venez à la prière
 Entrez dans
 le droit chemin
 Entrez dans
 le droit chemin
 Dieu est grand
 Dieu est grand
 De tous les dieux,
 il n'y a que Dieu
 A l'aube, le muezzin ajoute:
 Prier vaut mieux
 que dormir
 Prier vaut mieux
 que dormir

C'est un jeune homme barbu, avec un turban qui lui ceint la tête et un chapelet dans la main. Aux lèvres, un sourire un peu timide mais sur le visage, Amer est le parfait exemple du musulman attaché à sa religion et à sa pratique. Que fait ce dévot dans la vie ? Il est muezzin, celui qui appelle à la prière.

Depuis 3 ans, c'est tous les jours la même chose. Amer se lève avant l'aube pour se rendre à la mosquée et y rester jusqu'au soir. Son travail ne l'exaspère jamais : il est au contraire déterminé à assumer cette responsabilité toute sa vie.

«Tous les sentiments de lassitude ou de somnolence se dissipent avec les premières gouttes d'eau de l'ablution. Après, je ne pense qu'à tous ces musulmans qui dorment et qui comptent sur moi, raconte-t-il en égrenant son chapelet, lorsqu'un dévot de travailler avec

l'intention de plaire à Dieu, cela devient un engagement, voire un culte». Dès son plus jeune âge, Amer désire vivement devenir un muezzin. «Le muezzin représentait la personnalisation de mes rêves, avoue-t-il, j'aimais l'écouter lorsqu'il appelait à la prière et parfois je l'imitais». En 1994, son rêve devient réalité et il est chargé de l'appel à la prière dans la mosquée de l'université de Yarmouk à Irbid. «C'est devenu plus qu'un hobby ou qu'un métier. C'est un devoir que j'ai envers ma religion et les musulmans qui me font confiance». Amer ne prend pas sa vocation à la légère : «Je ne traîne pas,

je dois être ponctuel et régulier». Pas de vacances donc pour ce jeune muezzin d'une trentaine d'années.

Et chaque fois qu'il s'apprête à lancer l'appel, quelque chose se passe en lui : «Je ressens un lien particulier et fort entre moi et Dieu». Une profonde dévotion qui rend Amer très accroché à sa profession. Quand quelqu'un lui demande de faire l'appel à la place, il ne refuse pas mais il fait «un grand effort pour cacher son impression d'être privé de quelque chose de très précieux».

En plus d'observer les pratiques de l'Islam, Amer, qui a quitté l'école à 15 ans pour la

vie professionnelle, est un grand lecteur. «Je n'ai pas voulu abandonner mes rêves d'études. J'ai donc décidé de m'instruire moi-même».

Aujourd'hui Amer est marié avec trois enfants. Il tâche de leur transmettre une «bonne» éducation religieuse et de les aider à obtenir leurs diplômes : «Je discute avec eux des préceptes du Coran et des Hadiths (paroles du prophète, NDLR). Et je tiens beaucoup à leur offrir, ce dont j'ai été privé, c'est-à-dire l'enseignement supérieur».

N. K.



Depuis trois ans, Amer se lève tous les jours avant l'aube pour se rendre à la mosquée de l'université du Yarmouk à Irbid. Sa mission : éveiller les esprits encore endormis pour les amener à la prière.

Interview

«Le muezzin se bouche les oreilles»

Dr. Fakhri Abu Safieh est professeur de la loi musulmane à l'Université du Yarmouk. Pour lui, le muezzin a une place essentielle dans l'Islam et doit respecter un certain nombre de rites bien établis.

Le Jourdain : Pourquoi l'appel à la prière est aussi important pour les musulmans ?

Il est aussi important pour les musulmans. Il doit connaître les heures exactes de chaque prière (qui changent en fonction des jours et des saisons, NDLR).

Fakhri Abu Safieh : L'homme souvent ne résiste pas aux séductions et aux préoccupations de la vie. Le muezzin a donc pour mission d'éveiller son attention, de lui rappeler qu'il faut prier et s'adresser à Dieu.

Le Jourdain : Et celui qui entend l'appel à la prière...

F. A. S. : Le musulman doit répéter tout ce que chante le muezzin.

Le Jourdain : Dans la religion islamique, quelle est la position du Muezzin ?

Le Jourdain : Est-il possible de dire sa prière avant d'entendre l'appel ?

F. A. S. : Selon les Hadith, le muezzin, au jour du jugement dernier, sera un des trois personnages enviés par les gens car émanera de lui l'odeur du musc (avec lui, il y aura aussi l'imam et le vrai dévot). De plus, des hommes, des «djins» (démons) et même des objets pourront témoigner qu'ils l'entendaient appeler à la prière. C'est une preuve supplémentaire de sa piété et même un privilège que Dieu a accordé au muezzin.

Le Jourdain : Quelles sont les conditions pour être un bon muezzin ?

F. A. S. : Il faut déjà avoir une bonne voix. Ensuite, le muezzin doit bien effectuer ses ablutions. L'appel à la prière se fait debout et d'après un hadith, il est préférable qu'il mette ses doigts dans ses oreilles afin d'avoir une voix plus claire et plus aiguë. La ponctualité

Le Jourdain : Dans certaines mosquées, les appels à la prière sont parfois enregistrés sur cassette. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

F. A. S. : Quand c'est nécessaire, l'enregistrement est utile. Mais cela ne peut remplacer la présence d'un homme qui doit satisfaire aux critères religieux.

Propos recueillis par Nabel Al-Khlouf

C'est la vie

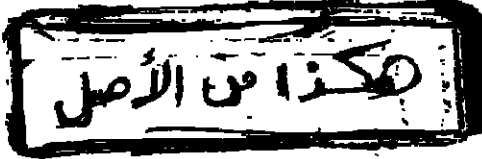
L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Claude Chabrol. *Paulet au vinaigre*, avec J. Poiret, C. Cellier (1984). Dans une ville de province, un complot se fomenta pour exproprier une femme paralysée et son fils. Mercredi 9 octobre à 20h30 au Centre culturel français. Tél. : 637009/636445/612658.

Exposition

Les œuvres des grands maîtres catalans de ce siècle (Picasso, Miró, Dali...) sont à Djebel Lweibdeh, à la Galerie nationale des Arts, jusqu'au 28 octobre.



With Elton John

Sorrows notwithstanding, he's still standing

By Robert Hilburn

AS ELTON John prepares to begin his first US concert tour in more than two years, the question many fans are asking is whether he is going to sing the eulogy to Diana, Princess of Wales, that is a sales phenomenon around the world.

"Absolutely not," the singer-composer says quickly and firmly when asked during an interview about performing the special version of "Candle in the Wind" that he and lyricist Bernie Taupin wrote for Princess Diana's funeral last 6 September.

"The only way I'll ever sing it again is if the children [Princess William and Harry] ask me. Otherwise, it would be totally inappropriate."

John, 50, feels so strongly about the matter that he is uncertain about even singing the original version of "Candle in the Wind" again. That song, which he and Taupin wrote in 1973 about Marilyn Monroe, is one of the most popular of the British performer's more than 50 US Top 40 hits, a total surpassed only by Elvis Presley.

"I don't know how I'll eventually feel

about that," he continues. "To me, that's a totally different song, but it may be that the feelings will be too closely connected. I think I'm just going to put it to one side now...just drop it for a while and then see how I feel."

John is astonished at the reaction to the version, officially titled "Candle in the Wind 1997," that has been released as a charity single. Retail orders in the United States alone are 11 million, an unprecedented number.

"What is happening, I think, is that people want a memento of her and they've found that in the single," he says.

John's invitation to sing at the funeral symbolizes the way he has in recent years become such a respected figure.

Greatly affected in 1990 by the heroic struggle of teenage AIDS victim Ryan White, John overcame his own cocaine problems and in 1992 started the nonprofit Elton John AIDS Foundation, which has raised more than \$13 million.

To avoid appearing as if he is exploiting the new "Candle" single or the deaths of his friends, Diana and fashion designer Gianni Versace, John announced this week

that he will not make any further public comments to the media about the deaths. He even canceled an appearance on NBC's "Today" show after the network aired promotions stating that John would be appearing on the program to discuss the deaths.

But the singer agreed to document his feelings about the deaths and other matters because the interview had been scheduled before Princess Diana's death, and because it is the latest in a series with the *Los Angeles Times* that dates back to 1970.

On the eve of the two-month tour, which begins Oct. 10 in Winston-Salem, NC, John talks about the events of recent months and the changes in his life in the '90s.

Many people might assume you simply met Princess Diana a few times at charity events, but the relationship was much closer, wasn't it?

Yes, I got to know her quite well and, of course, we had some things in common. We were both bulimic for a start and we both had marriages that failed and we were both extremely interested in AIDS. You could talk about those and other issues with her in a way that you probably couldn't with any other member of the royal family. That's why she was such a special person.

How did the invitation to sing at the funeral come about?

It all happened quickly. I got a call from Richard Branson (the British entrepreneur and founder of Virgin Records), who said, "You might have to get prepared to sing at the funeral," but I really didn't know until Thursday of that week that I was definitely going to sing. I think it was a matter of protocol, whether everyone involved felt it was appropriate.

It was such an emotional moment. How did you avoid breaking down during the song?

Basically, I just had to switch off mentally. When the coffin came into Westminster Abbey I cried and when it went out I cried, but the only time I came close to it during the song was at the beginning of the third verse. I just had to grit my teeth.

In some ways, people looked on you as their representative, don't you think? I felt very much like a representative at that moment. It was an honor just to be

invited to the funeral, but to also be able to sing that song. It's probably the biggest honor of my life. I don't think anything will ever match it for me.

I was so touched by the way people reacted to Princess Diana's death. The way they waited 11 to 12 hours in the rain to sign the (memorial) books. Their dignity, their generosity, their genuine outpouring of grief. I've never seen anything like that.

People say that's what it was like after the second World War in England when people just got together and shared their emotions. It was just a wonderful feeling for a week in England. The hope that maybe something positive could come out of this awfulness.

What about your relationship with Gianni Versace (who was slain 15 July outside his home in Miami)? That even had deeper ties than Princess Diana, didn't it?

He was like a soul mate really, someone more or less the same as me. Completely obsessive, slightly mad, always wanting to change things, to learn things. He taught me so much about art, architecture. If we were in Venice, he would take me to every church. You would never have a dull moment with him.

If you listen to some of the songs on your new album (the just-released "The Big Picture"), especially "Something About the Way You Look Tonight" and "Live Like Horses," you'd think they were written after the deaths, even though they weren't. They are the kind of comforting and optimistic songs that help people through troubled times. Do you often turn to music yourself for comfort?

Sure. There's a song on the new Beth Nielsen Chapman album about losing her husband (to a rare form of lymphoma) that has helped me deal with my grief. It's called "Sand and Water" and it says everything I want to say. It's weird because she gave me the tape before Gianni and Princess Diana died and it didn't mean all that it does now. But now it is so relevant and I'm going to sing it on the tour because it says everything I feel. I can't sing "Candle in the Wind," but I have to get something out of me and that song will help me do it. I've asked her to write a new verse for me.



Do you look back in your life on the Ryan White experience as a turning point?

I would never have been able to cope with things that have happened to me if I hadn't changed my life. No way. Can you imagine if all this had happened eight years ago? My life is so much calmer, much happier now.

What about your AIDS foundation? There's a lot to celebrate in the battle against AIDS isn't there?

Yes, people have been extremely generous to our foundation and all the other AIDS campaigns, and so much progress has been made. But I think a lot of people have the perception that AIDS is going away, but the fact is it's still rising around the world, especially among women.

Before people start calling you Saint Elton, they ought to see the "Tantrums and Tiaras" documentary that is airing

on Cinemax (Tuesday and Nov. 5). It shows you in a couple of real tantrums. Do you have any misgivings about that film?

No, not at all (laughing). It was my idea to do that kind of documentary and David (Furnish, the director) did an excellent job. There's a program in England called "The South Bank Show" and it's very good, but it's so reverential. So, I thought it would be good to try to break some ground, be a little braver.

When I saw some of my bad behavior, I just laughed. Those things happen to every artist, especially after you get run down from weeks of touring, which is what happened in the scene where I (storm off) the tennis court and say I'm never going to the South of France again. Well, you know what? I've just bought a house there (laughs). So you see, life does go on.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Elton John sings 'Candle in the Wind' during Diana's funeral

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THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeld Nasser

Intranets promise to give corporations huge productivity gains:

'Intra'-Productivity

By Jabra Ghneim

Special to The Star

THE INTERNET has introduced the greatest revolution in information sharing and distribution since the invention of the printing press. Still, the impact of the Internet on the world economy as a whole has not been fully realized yet.

Behind the scenes, another force is shaping the world's macroeconomy. This force is an Internet driven technology we call the Intranet.

Intranets are simply internal networks in companies based on Internet technologies such as the browser and the server. Unlike internal networks based on GroupWare programs such as Lotus Notes, employees can access and search large amounts of data they would otherwise have to hunt down in databases, spreadsheets, and even hard-copy documents. Intranets are not because they represent simplicity in terms of access and retrieval. Browsers in general have a universal look and feel that is easy to learn even among the most computer illiterate groups. In addition, many browsers and servers are either free or low priced.

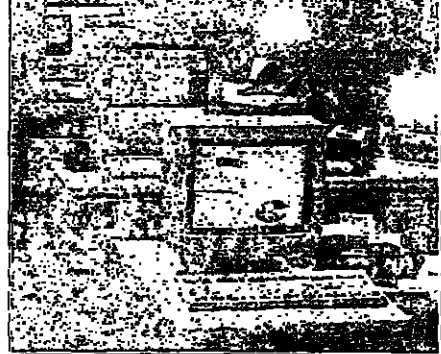
Some companies like Microsoft bundle them for free with their heavy-duty applications. Thus, corporations don't have to invest huge sums of precious budget money on technology upgrades or training.

What many haven't realized

yet is that Intranets have already made major contributions to the productivity in many corporations worldwide.

This change is best realized in three areas:

Customer Service: The best



way to serve the customer has always been by a direct link with the people in charge. In addition to providing all the relevant information he needed which relates to the product or service offered, intranets link the company's internal network with its sites on the Internet. Customers visiting the site can directly get any information they need or send e-mails and feedback directly to the people concerned. This helps companies spot almost instantly any changes in the consumer's attitude.

"Customer-centric" computing is the term that best describes this attitude, where many customer service functions are automated and companies can do business directly

with the customers. The result is greater consumer satisfaction and of course profits.

Knowledge Sharing: Additional workers don't necessarily hamper productivity any more. Corporations are increasingly realizing that their most important asset is the knowledge and experience their workers have.

Using simple tools like e-mail, a true open door policy can be implemented.

Management can hear directly from employees, thus knowing how to better steer their organizations and increase competitiveness. In addition, co-workers can exchange knowledge and information, which enhances their ability to work together.

This has caused a radical change at the microeconomic level changing the dominant economic paradigm from decreasing returns to increasing returns to scale. This means that increasing use of a knowledge resource increases productivity and not the other way around.

Cost Savers: With Intranets, administrators can use PUSH technology products to update internal systems whenever a user boots up his/her machine. This represents a huge saving for companies when it comes to IT costs in comparison with traditional GroupWare solutions.

Currently the Gartner group estimates that the cost of setting up an Intranet ranges from \$50,000 to millions of dollars

Microsoft uses licensing as anti-piracy weapon

MICROSOFT IS trying to encourage the region's corporate software users to clean up by showing them the benefits of having legal software.

Accordingly, Microsoft has recently outlined its "volume discount model" for corporates and the service and support available to legal users.

The idea is to protect investments in Arabization made by regional and international developers, which number is around 650 software products. Microsoft announced its licensing and support programs which show that it doesn't necessarily have to cost a fortune for corporate buyers to be legal. Also, in the end these users will get better value for money.

Large software users tend to think that having one thousand licensed users means having to buy one thousand separate



boxes. This is not the case, however, under programs like Microsoft's Select and Open. With Open, buyers make a payment based on initial volume of products ordered. There are three pricing pools and the more products ordered, the higher the discount.

Any number of products can be re-ordered throughout the two year period of the agree-

ment at the pricing level determined by the original order.

With Select you make a forecast of how many licenses you will need during the following two years. You choose from three product pools—application, system and server—and discounts depend on how many points you pick up within that pool. Points awarded differ depending on the products you buy. To qualify for these discounts, users have to fulfill 25 percent of their forecast after six months and 50 percent by the end of the first year.

Microsoft also outlined the various free and paid-up support options that legal users can obtain. These range from three free-of-charge incidents for every registered operating system and desktop product, to Premier, a 24 x 7 service for corporates. ■

News update**Acquisitions & buyouts**

Over the past couple of months, a series of Acquisitions and buyouts have been announced in the international computer industry.

Gateway 2000, a leading PC supplier based in the USA, announced its purchase of ALR (Advanced Logic Research), another well-known American PC manufacturer. The deal was

made at \$194 Million, allowing Gateway to immediately

acquire the required expertise in the server market, including multi-processing systems which ALR specializes in. ALP systems will still be available under the same name.

On another note, Compaq announced that it had finalized the arrangements involved in its purchase of Tandem Corporation, a pioneer worldwide in the manufacture of fault-

tolerant systems. The idea is to increase Compaq's ability to provide complete solutions, by utilizing Compaq's well-built sales and support channels.

Tandem users will benefit from an even stronger commitment in local markets. Technology exchange between companies will be to the benefit of customers.

Another deal recently approved was the purchase of US Robotics by 3 Com. US Robotics is a major provider of modems and communications hardware in general, while 3 Com delivers comprehensive networking hardware and solutions. This transaction creates a networking giant worth \$6.6 Billion, that should compete with the likes of Cisco.

Dell opens Middle East office

Dell Computer, one of the top PC manufacturers worldwide, has announced that it will open its Middle East office in Dubai during GITEX '97, the region's largest computer and information technology exhibition. This move resembles Dell's commitment to the region and its interest in being closer to its markets.

powerful as the Latin applications. The strongest and relatively most comprehensive tool available so far is Office 97 in Arabic from Microsoft.

Microsoft claims that its products allow users to build Intranets in 60 minutes.

Other companies like Sakher offer a set of solutions that include a search engine and an authoring tool in Arabic. These tools offer basic services, but will suffice if all you have in mind is a basic Intranet that can do the job, and take your operation into the 21st century. ■

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Hot news from Europe

By Alex Johnson

POLICE BLOTTER: Fallout from the English bribery investigation:

The Premier League's report on under-the-table payments to grease player transfers has revived police interest in the transfer of Teddy Sheringham from Nottingham Forest to Tottenham Hotspur five years ago.

Prosecutors dropped their investigation in 1994, citing a lack of evidence to substantiate allegations that a Forest coach was paid \$75,000 to seal the deal. But the league's investigators are reported to have uncovered persuasive new evidence (for example, that the payment took place at a hotel in Luton and that the executive used the money to pay for his daughter's wedding), leading London and Nottingham police to begin inquiries.

The problem is by no means an England-only phenomenon. The most prominent cases in the English probe, for example, involve transfers from Norway and Denmark, as well. And it was the Italian and Swiss branches of this story that stepped forward last week when Swiss authorities

agreed to release details of a confidential bank account alleged to have been used for under-the-table payments in the transfer of Gigi Lenini from Torino to AC Milan in 1992.

In addition to the official \$10.5 million fee for Lenini—the most expensive transfer in the world at the time—Milan authorities are investigating whether AC Milan paid an extra \$4 million under the table. Lenini, meanwhile, has been charged with tax fraud in a separate investigation.

Meanwhile, the English scandal has turned so scary that league officials—presumably the people who would want to keep a lid on publicity—have complained that reporters are underplaying the story. Mihir Bose of the Daily Telegraph, the most plugged-in of English reporters on this story, reports that sources close to the investigation have said press coverage has given too much prominence to what he called "self-serving assertions of innocence" by some of the targets of the investigation.

Belgium: UEFA reversed itself and decided to ban Anderlecht from the next European tournament for which it is eligible for bribing the referee before a UEFA Cup

semifinal match against Nottingham Forest in 1984. UEFA had said it could take no action because the offense took place more than 10 years ago, but it turns out that the Belgian Football Union referred the allegation to UEFA in 1992. Inside the 10-year limit. That also opens the way for former Forest players to seek compensation in court, in expectation of such a ruling, the club has been working on a civil case since March.

Meanwhile, UEFA President Lennart Johansson appointed a three-man committee to find out why it took so long for the matter to surface, saying the documents reporting the matter in 1992 mysteriously "disappeared."

"I have no reason to doubt they were sent, but UEFA hasn't found these documents," he said.

Bulgaria: First Division Dobrudzha Drivich, the club that walked off the field this month during a game it was losing, ostensibly to protect the referee, was fined \$750,000 and banned from playing games at home for the rest of the year. The federation also awarded Lokomotiv Sofia, Dobrudzha's opponents, a 3-0 victory.

England: Kevin Keegan is back, Keegan, who walked out on Newcastle United last season, citing the pressure of the job,

was named chief executive of Second Division Fulham, which is owned by Mohamed Al Fayed. Keegan's first move was to replace coach Mickey Adams with former Queen's Park Rangers coach Ray Wilkins.

France: The Fabrizio Ravanelli saga ended last week when the Italian international striker signed for Olympique Marseille.

Ravanelli had earned on a loud public campaign to leave Middlesbrough of the English First Division, which finally managed to sell him off for \$8 million. Ravanelli, who signed a four-year contract, had demanded for months that Middlesbrough sell him to a major club, but he was the biggest obstacle: Boro had deals lined up with several clubs, only for Ravanelli's own salary demands to scuttle them.

Greece: The players' union last week said it was considering a strike that would disrupt the national team's crucial Oct. 11 World Cup qualifier against Denmark to protest the side of foreign players flooding the Greek league. The threat comes after the federation changed its regulations to increase the number of non-European Union players a team can field from four to six, a move the union said means even more Greek players will be squeezed out of jobs by imported stars.

Glasgow Rangers ended up not buying AEK Athens after all. Instead, the Greek giants are now the property of English National Investment Co.

Holland: Culminating almost a year of investigations, police arrested 20 people alleged to be responsible for Holland's recent spasm of hooliganism. Seized in the operation were photos of soccer riots, knives and illegal drugs, police said. Ever since a man was killed in a battle between fans of Ajax Amsterdam and Feyenoord last season, police said it had become clear that Dutch soccer violence was being organized by a small core of hooligans who have taken to using cellular telephones and the Internet to prearrange fights.

Italy: The players' union joined league and federation officials in complaining that there are too many foreign players in Serie A.

"We are witnessing a curious phenomenon: a fully-fledged crusade, led by leading federal and club executives, observers and critics, against the massive numbers of foreign players in our championship," union president Sergio Campana said last week.

Scotland: Call it whatever you want, but the 10 Premier Division teams have offered the 30 lower-division teams a \$1.6 million bribe to back the big clubs' plans to break away into a separate Premier League based on the English model. It's a statement on the size of the economic gap between Scotland's big and little clubs that the payment



Brazilian Ronaldo is one of the footballers who plays in an Italian team

—which averages about \$53,000 per team—may well be accepted at the Scottish league meetings this week. On the other hand, the smaller clubs might as well take the money, since a spokesman for the big clubs said they'll just go off on their own regardless.

Spain: Barcelona striker Hristo Stoichkov's battle with Coach Louis Van Gaal predictably ended up with Stoichkov on the losing end. Stoichkov, the Bulgarian international who cuts coaches for breakfast, said last week that Barca should fire Van Gaal and rehire Johan Cruyff. The problem seems to be Van Gaal's insistence that his strikers tackle back and pressure opposing defenders, skills for which Stoichkov is not noted, to be polite ("Van Gaal should remember that I've been a striker all my life, not a defender," Stoichkov said, among other things).

Stoichkov, who's still living off his brilliant performance in the 1994 World Cup, is likely to run into a brick wall if he takes a run at Van Gaal, who crunched Ajax Amsterdam to the European Cup and is thoroughly devoted to the Dutch "total football" model. Van Gaal is so highly regarded by the Barcelona leadership that it looked out Bobby Robson as coach in his favor over one of the club's greatest seasons: 1995-96, there's no chance at all for the return of Cruyff, whose primary pastime at the moment seems to be suing Barcelona.

The national team qualified for next year's World Cup final round, beating Slovakia 2-1 last week. Spain, undefeated in nine qualifying games, becomes the 14th team to join champions Brazil and hosts France next summer. ■

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